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Daily Report

Near East & South Asia

FBIS-NES-95-054
Tuesday
21 March 1995

Daily Report
Near East & South Asia

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Arab-Israeli Talks

Tunisian Paper Reports 'Secret' PLO-Israel Talks

JN2003112495 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1637 GMT 19 Mar 95

[Palestine broadcast: "Talk of the Return"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Brother strugglers: The first Oslo agreement was in 1993. Now, we hear talk about a second Oslo agreement, and, perhaps there will be talk about a third and fourth Oslo agreement and so forth, rediscussing the Oslo agreement provisions that have already been discussed. Each provision in this old agreement needs one or more new agreements.

The Tunisian newspaper AL-SHURUQ has revealed a new secret track of negotiations between Israel and the PLO leadership in Oslo. It is called the second Oslo agreement track, and in it, Nabil Sha'th is the head of the Palestinian side. The Tunisian newspaper cites well-informed Palestinian sources as saying: The track of the second Oslo agreement is concerned about a mechanism to implement the first Oslo agreement especially regarding the redeployment of Israeli forces, elections, and transferring power to the Palestinian self-rule authority.

The newspaper adds that members of the PLO Executive Committee and Fatah Central Committee have asked to be informed about this new track. Dr. Samir Ghawshah, one of these members, denied any knowledge of the second Oslo agreement. This means that, with some exceptions, the negotiations are being held behind the backs of members of both leaderships.

It is noteworthy that the first Oslo agreement was a surprise to members of these two leaderships just as it was a surprise to the Palestinian delegation to the bilateral negotiations in Washington, headed by Dr. Haydar 'Abd-al-Shafi at the time. Hence, it cannot be ruled out that new secret negotiations are taking place in Oslo to crystallize the second Oslo agreement between the two sides; that is, the limited self-rule authority and Israel.

'Secret Agreement' Said Reached

JN2003171595 Paris AL-MUHARRIR in Arabic 20 Mar 95 p 2

["Exclusive report from Tunis"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Sources in the Palestinian leadership in Tunis have stated that by the end of last week, a secret agreement was concluded between the Israeli Government and the self-rule authority. They said that the agreement includes very dangerous points that will have a devastating effect on the Palestinian side if they are implemented.

A source in the leadership told AL-MUHARRIR that the agreement that was reached is a development of the formula on administrative rule in Janin that Yitzhaq Rabin proposed to 'Arafat during their meeting last February. According to the source, the decision to keep the agreement in complete secrecy is due to the pledge the Israeli side got from 'Arafat that the price of this Israeli "concession" will be dealing a blow to the Hamas Movement and Islamic Jihad in the Gaza Strip before the agreement can be brought to light.

Observers recall that during his meeting with Rabin at Erez crossing last February, 'Arafat rejected the offer presented by the Israeli prime minister to reduce the Oslo agreement to merely municipal and services rule, starting with Janin. Following that meeting, he told journalists would not agree to be changed from the president of the Palestinian people into the chief of Janin municipality. He recalled that he had been running the affairs of all Palestinian municipalities from his headquarters in Beirut, and then from Tunis without any agreements with the Israelis.

The source added that this refusal was not the end because the Israelis told 'Arafat later that his options are very limited, and that he must either accept the idea of Janin first, following an amendment that is something similar to redeployment in return for the delayed price of liquidating Hamas and Islamic Jihad, or else he will be left in Gaza to face his fate.

The source said the interval between the Rabin-'Arafat meeting in February and the recent Peres-'Arafat meeting witnessed secret negotiations in which [Palestinian Authority member] Ahmad Quray', Abu-'Ala', took part on the Palestinian side in a Scandinavian capital. It was agreed to develop the idea of Janin first according to which redeployment will take place from areas in stages and over long time spans between each stage.

Observers believe that these time spans were meant by the Israelis to give 'Arafat the chance to curb Hamas and Islamic Jihad. If he succeeds in neutralizing the two movements through reaching a clear agreement with them, or at least with Hamas, on the renunciation of violence, as the Israeli terms says, and stopping operations against Israeli targets—which is what he seeks now—this will be good. Otherwise, the only option he have is to use force, even if this leads to a civil war in Gaza, and probably elsewhere in the occupied territories. Available information indicates that 'Arafat is still trying to implement the first option through offering posts in the authority, to Hamas in particular, and at the same time he has not ruled out the possibility of the second option, although it is an option whose repercussions are not guaranteed and is a suicidal one.

Reports from the Gaza Strip emphasize that all concerned parties are preparing for the more dangerous option. It has not been ruled out that within the next few days, the Israelis will provide 'Arafat's police with 15,000 light weapons, compared with 25,000 weapons possessed by the opposition factions in addition to the weapons they manufacture, including anti-tank rockets.

Palestinian Affairs

'Arafat Interviewed on Differences With Israel

NC2003152095 Cairo UKTUBAR in Arabic 19 Mar 95 pp 17-20

[Interview with PLO Chairman Yasir 'Arafat by unidentified correspondents in Cairo; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] ['Arafat] Frankly speaking, the situation is difficult, but when was it not difficult? We are speaking about an issue which is the crux and core of the Arab nation's issue. Whether we like or not, it is the issue of every Arab. We are speaking about the land of the first qiblah and the third holy mosque [Jerusalem]. Surely, we are waging a difficult battle. Nevertheless, we have been able to prove a number of very important facts. I have told the Israelis in one of the sessions of the talks between me and them: Abroad, I am the president of the State of Palestine, the chairman of the PLO, the permanent deputy chairman of the Conference of the Islamic Organization, and the permanent deputy chairman of the nonaligned states. Nevertheless, I have consented to sit with you while you refuse to call me President 'Arafat. You call "chairman" [previous word in English] or chairman of the authority. Why have I accepted this? Why do I tolerate this? Because I want to establish peace in the land of peace, the peace of the brave. It is a difficult process historically, psychologically, and personally, particularly as we know that peace has many enemies.

When we agreed with Israel, the most important thing, in my view, was that it was an agreement between the PLO, the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, and the Government of Israel. The first Zionist conference in Basel in 1897 called Palestine a land without a people for a people without a land. The Balfour Declaration then came and called the Palestinians a "minority." The [1947 UN] partition resolution then came and gave the Jews more than the owners of the land. We took 46 percent of the land and they took 54 percent of it. Even this resolution was not implemented. Between 1947 and 1967 only 23 percent of the Palestinian land was left. Afterward, they [Israelis] occupied all the Palestinian land. To the refugees were added new refugees who were called displaced people and who were expelled by force.

The plan was to expel all the Palestinian people from the Palestinian land but the Palestinian people had learned from the refugee problem. They stayed put, despite all the terrorism they had faced.

When they used to ask Golda Meir about the Palestinian people, she used to say: Where are the Palestinian people? There are no Palestinian people. I am the Palestinian people. This woman was worried by the number of Palestinian children born every day. She was saying this. This talk is not mine but hers.

Then World War III broke out [collapse of the Soviet Union] One of the superpowers collapsed economically, not militarily. In the wake of this war, the landscape of the world changed and states disappeared. In the midst of all this, we were able through the Gaza-Jericho accord to put the Palestinian people on the political and geographical map of the Middle East, regardless of the negative or positive points of the accord.

However, the real problem is the vacillation and procrastination of the Israeli side in implementing the remainder of the agreement, especially in regard to withdrawal from populated areas in the rest of the West Bank as a first step, the holding of elections, the subject of Jerusalem, and the settlements.

Their pretext is security. I understand the security which they use as an excuse. After the Cairo agreement was signed on 4 May 1994, the withdrawal and the holding of elections were supposed to start after three months. But 19 months have already passed and nothing has been implemented. Therefore, there is an attempt to escape from what we agreed upon.

At the beginning, they said there are no sacred states. But how can we implement the agreement? Perhaps I will remind you of my refusal to sign the maps on the date the agreement was signed. I refused to sign unless I got an official letter of guarantee from Egypt and the Americans and Russians—the cosponsors of the conference. I obtained this guarantee and I signed. I signed after obtaining an Egyptian-U.S.-Russian guarantee.

As I have said, their excuse at the beginning was that there are no sacred dates. Afterward, they said the Palestinian Authority [PA] does not have funds. The Egyptian side acted and we interceded with the U.S. and Russian sides and the EU and a meeting was held in Brussels in November. The meeting decided to cover our expenses in the West Bank for six months.

Then the recent acts of violence occurred and they used them as a pretext. I also could have used as a pretext the acts of violence that occurred against me, such as the massacres in Jerusalem and Hebron. However, we did not stop. I came to Cairo to signed the agreement. Therefore, they are looking for excuses to obstruct the implementation of the agreement.

They use the pretext of security, which they have not been able to achieve for 27 years. They expect me to achieve security in six or nine months. How, when I do not even have radios for the Palestinian police? Even the 40 cars that we have received as a gift from the Spanish Government to organize traffic, they took the radios out of them. And yet they ask us to achieve security. Despite all this, I am doing the best I can but I do not have Moses' magic wand!

[UKTUBAR] You have met recently with President Mubarak. What are the important issues you discussed during the meeting?

['Arafat] The meeting followed my recent tour, during which I met with His Majesty King Fahd, King Hassan, Mr. Christopher, and before that Mr. Peres. It also followed the quadripartite meeting that had been attended by my brother Nabil Sha'th, the first meeting to be held on the repatriation of displaced persons. During that meeting, it was agreed that the displaced persons would return during the interim period. In light of all this, it was natural for me to meet with President Mubarak. It was also natural for me to brief him on all the problems I have encountered and my discussions with Peres and Christopher on ways to salvage the peace process. It was natural to share with him my concerns and complaints. Where else but here in Egypt would I do that?

[UKTUBAR] What went on between you and Peres?

['Arafat] Unfortunately, Mr. Peres avoided raising the fundamental issues: The redeployment, elections, and settlements. However, we agreed to continue the talks between us until 1 June, not 1 July as he said later!! At any rate, we agreed to resume the suspended talks during that period and also to discuss some other issues agreed upon, such as the committee on prisoners, the safe corridor, crossing points with Egypt and Jordan, settlement, and five new powers that we obtained in addition to the five others we already have. The powers we now have are education, health, social affairs, tourism, and taxation. We were given the powers of industry, trade, labor, fuel, and telecommunications. Naturally, we are supposed to begin in June the implementation of what is to be agreed upon between now and June, including the elections. I say supposed to, because they procrastinate when it comes to implementation.

[UKTUBAR] What about your meeting with the U.S. Secretary of State? Did Christopher bring new ideas this time?

['Arafat] Mr. Christopher brought me a message from President Clinton on the U.S. Administration's desire to activate and give momentum to the peace process. I explained to him all the obstacles and difficulties we are facing. For his part, he promised to make every possible U.S. effort. He underlined the U.S. Administration's wish that I make greater efforts as far as the security issue is concerned. I told Mr. Christopher that I am prepared to do that provided the other party exerts more efforts to implement the agreement. Actually, I asked for specific requests from the U.S. secretary of state, and he promised to relay them to the Israelis. He also relayed to us some Israeli proposals.

[UKTUBAR] The world community has made a commitment to finance peace and to assist you. So far, it is obvious that you have not received this assistance. What is delaying the arrival of the aid to you at a time when we are all aware of the deteriorating economic conditions in Gaza and Jericho?

['Arafat] And this is a new concern to add to the ones we already have. Unfortunately, only very little of what had been promised us was implemented, so much so that the World Bank representative said to me in Brussels: We must be ashamed to look President 'Arafat in the eye because in early 1994 we promised him $720 millions, which later shrunk into $400 millions, then to $200 millions, and finally to $125 millions. Of the last amount, we only received one third! They cited many excuses at the beginning, such as the Palestinian institutions were not ready. Now they admit, and the World Bank itself admits, that the delay is from the donors and not because of the lack of Palestinian institutions or projects. We told them even if we did not have institutions or projects, are the UN bodies short on projects? Come and carry out the projects you want to implement through the UN.

[UKTUBAR] But we heard that economic agreements exist with Egypt, Tunisia, and Jordan.

['Arafat] Undoubtedly there is an Israeli attempt to confine us to the Israeli economy, and this is one of the issues we are fighting against. The Israelis have no right to do that. If they want to shut off their links with Gaza, this does not give them the right to shut my links with Jordan, Egypt, or the sea. Israel has no right to shut off my links with the others so that I may choke and so that Israel may get the entire cake!

[UKTUBAR] We heard U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher say that he would launch a new campaign to persuade donor states to pay the funds due to you and to find other financial sources to help the PA fulfill its duty. He also said that a team of U.S. experts would soon arrive to help the PA in the fields of agriculture and agricultural documentation. The team will provide medical assistance and 200 military vehicles.

['Arafat] Yes, he promised that and actually told me about it. He said that the U.S. President himself made that promise and that he—Christopher—would tour donor states to urge them to honor their promises. I thanked him, naturally.

But the problem is that the Americans present things as though it were a two-sided matter: security for the Israelis and economics for the Palestinians. They tell us that if we solve the security aspect they would help solve the economic one. This is a wrong equation; it is rather unfair. The main problem is a political one: to make progress in negotiations on the West Bank, to achieve the Israeli withdrawal from towns and villages in the Bank, to hold elections, and to proceed toward a final solution. Unless all this is done, it would be impossible to solve the economic problem. The point is that whenever they give us financial assistance the Israelis impose a permanent closure and blockade. The blockade costs us many times the assistance we have received from abroad.

I asked Mr. Christopher if he thought it was logical for the closure to continue from May to this moment. That is 164 days. I have lost $3-3.5 millions because of it. My losses as a result of the closure equal your donations. Is this logical?

[UKTUBAR] Is it part of the PA plans to transform the Palestinian territories into a productive being; what is the Arab position on finance; and where are the wealthy Palestinians?

['Arafat] To start with, I would like to state that with the admission of all, primarily the Israelis, the Palestinian worker and farmer are among the most efficient. Peres said at two international meetings, in Davos and Bucharest, that they—meaning the Palestinians—have workers and farmers who took the technology from us and then surpassed us. An Israeli general said to me: We get workers from you to pick flowers. We found out that the Israeli worker [as received] picks 400 flowers a day and those we bring from south east Asia pick 300 flowers a day.

Although the area of our land is small, we are using it in a very good manner. Our greenhouse production, for instance, is among the highest in the Arab world. This makes up for the small arable area. But we have an export problem. Our strawberries are unmatched worldwide. They are of an enormous size—and I told the World Bank representative about that—but we sell them cheap because we have no export market.

We were promised that they would open export markets to our products. In effect, the Israelis buy our strawberries, garments, meat, and flowers at the cheapest prices and then export them in their name.

The only glimpse of hope is that President Clinton has promised to exempt our exports to the United States from taxes. It is a promise we hope will be fulfilled. The Europeans promised us too. If these promises are fulfilled, our economic position will certainly improve.

As for Arab financing, it does not exist. Only Saudi Arabia honored its promise to us. Of course, I am talking about rich Arab states, not all.

Arabs strongly back us politically. There is certainly a good Arab position. It was demonstrated at the Islamic summit and then at the Alexandria summit. Support for the PA was among the most important decisions at that summit. Of course, I know that the Gulf war exhausted everybody, both militarily and economically.

As for the wealthy Palestinians, only a few of them came. We do not have a Palestinian "Rothschild". Thanks to the blockade, nobody comes to invest in a surrounded land. In spite of all these hardships, several Palestinian holding companies were established. Moreover, 11 branches of different banks were opened and work has started to set up a stock exchange. But we need much more.

[UKTUBAR] If there are problems regarding foreign funding, what about your own capabilities, especially since you require an infrastructure and have to pay salaries? We want to be sure if there is a Palestinian economy able to overcome the effects of the blockade.

['Arafat] If I manage to levy the usual taxes, particularly the value-added tax, the situation will change. But it is Israel that is levying this tax and it has paid me just 10 percent of my share of this tax over the last 10 months.

My monthly share in Gaza is $12 million and in the West Bank $20 million. These amounts alone are enough to cover my current expenditures and this, of course, is one of my problems with them.

[UKTUBAR] What is the reason for all this? What is the reason for all this evasion? In your view, why hasn't Israel implemented the agreement?

['Arafat] I believe the reason is to appease some opposition members within the Israeli military and nonmilitary establishments exactly as was the case when France signed its agreement with Algeria when there was opposition from within the French Army to signing this agreement. We are suffering from this situation permanently because some of those who implement the agreement belong to the opposition. For example, I do not understand why the Rafah crossing has not yet been opened to Egyptian goods. It should have been opened from the first day of the agreement.

Besides, Gaza, Gaza alone, buys from Israel goods worth $800 million every year. Gaza can only buy from Israel as long as there is closure and blockade. Strangely, there was an airport and a port in Gaza when they occupied it but they closed them. They even removed the railway ties and closed the crossing with Egypt. Therefore I am still an economic prisoner and all this has nothing to do with security, as Israel claims. We hope that both of us—Egypt and Palestine—will work together to break this blockade in the interest of Palestine and Egypt as well.

[UKTUBAR] You have spoken about your suffering, concerns, and the strong Arab political stand in support of Palestine. But do you believe that expediting the process of normalization with Israel is in the interest of peace?

['Arafat] I proudly say that there is an Arab stand, an Arab policy, and a distinct conviction that there should be no Arab rapprochement attempt and normalization in light of the suppression suffered by the Palestinian people and the nonimplementation of the agreement.

Also, there is an Arab conviction that the essence of peace is represented by whatever progress was achieved on the Palestinian track. President Mubarak stressed this to me very clearly. He said peace should be made with the Palestinian people first and then with the Arab nation. He said this to U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher.

[UKTUBAR] Does President 'Arafat feel optimistic or does he sense fear and misgivings?

['Arafat] Naturally, I regard the Israelis with misgivings. Indeed, I doubt that they are serious in implementing what has been agreed upon because of this procrastination and side stepping which has dragged on for nine months.

[UKTUBAR] Is there any contact between the PA and the Palestinians residing in the West Bank?

['Arafat] Absolutely. Today the Israelis are telling me to take and control Janin [West Bank city]. I conveyed to them my astonishment and told them I controlled all municipalities from Beirut. From Beirut I fought an election battle for the municipalities in 1976 and the PLO won 96 votes out of 116.

I even told them clearly that these municipalities take their orders from me to the point that if any two Palestinians in the West Bank cities have an argument, they come to me in Gaza and Jericho to resolve this disagreement.

I also remember that when I was in Tunis I appointed a mayor and council members for Hebron and the same thing happened in Nabulus.

[UKTUBAR] Concerning Jerusalem and Israel's determination to make it its capital, the U.S. Congress has admitted that there is pressure from the Jewish lobby in the United States, which is collecting contributions to transfer the U.S. embassy to Jerusalem. What does the president say about this?

['Arafat] Do the Americans need contributions? From my point of view, this is just a diversion. Holy Arab Jerusalem is land occupied in 1967 and is covered by Resolution 242, which is the basis of the peace process for which we went to Madrid.

Besides, the United States as of this moment is still officially committed to Jerusalem not being Israeli territory but occupied land. Therefore, it has not yet moved its embassy despite the efforts of the Jewish lobby.

The European stand is also clear and public and the agreement between us and the Israelis is also clear. When I was given the paper on changing the [PLO] Charter, and which I commented on after 1988 with the famous word "abolition"—meaning that there are resolutions that supersede previous ones—at the time I won a definite promise from them to preserve the Arab Palestinian institutions inside Jerusalem and the Christian and Islamic holy sites. I even insisted on giving priority to the Christian places over the Islamic ones to keep "the 'Umari pledge" [a pledge made by the Muslim Caliph 'Umar when he visited Jerusalem in the 7th century to preserve Christian sites in the city].

We also made an agreement that the Palestinians in Jerusalem would participate fully in the electoral process—voting, nominating, and election. My brother [Egyptian Foreign Minister] 'Amr Musa has approached Rabin on this issue and there was an Egyptian proposal to place two ballot boxes, one in the Church of the Holy Sepulcher and another in al-Aqsa Mosque.

[UKTUBAR] Has the dispute with King Husayn over Jerusalem been resolved? have you reached an agreement?

['Arafat] What we have agreed upon is what the Arabs and Muslims agreed on at the Casablanca Islamic summit and at the Jerusalem Committee's meeting in Morocco. I would also like to add one very clear statement: Jerusalem is our capital and no one has the right to internationalize it.

[UKTUBAR] Frankly, do your negotiations with the Israelis now require a third party?

['Arafat] We insist on this, but the Israelis always try to evade the participation of a third party, because they naturally do not want to be embarrassed. If they truly want to implement the agreement, why would they be concerned about a third party?

[UKTUBAR] After all this and since it is evident that the situation is full of complexities, what do you think the solution will be?

['Arafat] This is not a Palestinian-Israeli agreement; it is a Palestinian-Israeli-international agreement signed under the supervision of President Clinton in Washington and President Mubarak in Cairo in the presence of the two sponsors of the conference—the United States and Russia. It is not a bilateral agreement, so the international community as a whole must bear the responsibility for implementing this agreement. That is one point. There is another point: I am confident that our nation is able to face this problem exactly as the saying goes: "No mountain can be shaken by the winds".

So I tell the whole world that any tampering with the accord with the Palestinians will have an impact on the situation in the Middle East as a whole. Anyone who hinders the agreement must bear the responsibility for his actions. I even say that blocking the agreement will lead to unexpected explosive conditions. No one gets the cake without paying the price, and we have repeatedly said land for peace.

[UKTUBAR] What is clear is that the Israelis depend on our lack of patience. How can we be reassured in this respect?

['Arafat] Let me say that there are specific stipulated timetables to which they have to stick.

[UKTUBAR] Now that we are celebrating the Arab League's 50th anniversary, how do you see the League's future role in the Palestinian issue, particularly since the establishment of the League coincided with the beginning of the Palestine problem?

['Arafat] When I speak about the Arab League I speak of the Arab countries. Undoubtedly the Palestinian cause has been the Arab nation's major preoccupation since 1947 and even before that. This is a fact no one can deny and which is still true. The Palestinian cause is the main issue for the Arab League, the Islamic summit, and for the Nonaligned Countries. It is the main or central issue even for the African states. In the last vote at the UN, 137 countries sided with us with only two countries opposed—the United States and Israel. This shows how the world feels about our cause. We have been recognized by 137 countries—actually 138 if we add South Africa, which is Israel's friend and ally but which recognized us after my brother Mandela took over.

[UKTUBAR] The settlements constitute a real obstacle to peace. How do you think it can be overcome?

['Arafat] There is an agreement to discuss the major issues that are left for the final stage as soon as possible and not later than the beginning of the third year [from the date the Declaration of Principles was signed], that is 5 May 1996. Now they are not building new settlements but they are expanding the existing ones, as they did around Jerusalem where they have put up concrete buildings. They are trying to create a new demographic reality, which is a violation of the agreement.

[UKTUBAR] What about the Palestinian opposition, particularly Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] and the Jihad?

['Arafat] First of all let me say that we went to Madrid in accordance with a decision of the Palestine National Council [PNC] and not by my own decision. All these Islamic movements are represented in that council. There are representatives of Hamas, the Jihad, and other Palestinian organizations, regardless of whether they are for the Oslo Agreement. At any rate, we decided to go to Madrid. We also obtained a decision from the Palestinian Central Council—since it was difficult to arrange a meeting of the PNC—approving the Oslo Agreement. Despite the difficulty we face in practicing our democracy, we still try to practice democracy as our means allow it.

[UKTUBAR] What is your personal opinion of a Middle East market?

['Arafat] We did not make peace militarily just to be subjected to an economic colonization by anybody. I am not one of those impressed by Israel's capability. I have seen the example of Egypt, the first Arab country to make peace with Israel. It is true that some are engaged in a "race" [to establish ties with Israel], but I am certain that we do not fear a Middle East market. Egypt's experiment gives us confidence. This means that we are acting on our own terms, not the terms of others. At the same time, we cannot stop them from trying, but that does not mean that they will come to lead the region. Some do not want to admit that the international equation is not an Israeli equation. It is true that the international conflict between East and West has ended in favor of the West, but there are still some major powers, financial powers. Shall we become their shadow or an influential element in the new international economic equation? This is particularly true since it was the economy that defeated the largest nuclear power.

[UKTUBAR] When will the Palestinian prisoners be released?

['Arafat] Keeping the prisoners is the worst result of Israeli procrastination. These prisoners are the heroes of the resistance and the intifadah, who fought for the sake of a just peace that they are supposed to enjoy. We actually agreed on their release, and 1,700 prisoners were about to be released, but they postponed their release and now they are talking again about releasing them. There are still 6,000 prisoners locked up in the wake of a peace that is supposed to begin a new chapter in our relations. Attempts are being made to bargain with the prisoners, but I would like to point out that for me all prisoners are equal, chief among them being Hamas leader Shaykh Ahmad Yasin.

Fatah Central Committee Issues Statement

JN1903114995 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1015 GMT 19 Mar 95

["Text" of Fatah Central Committee statement on its meetings in Tunis on 15-18 March—read by announcer]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Central Committee of the Palestinian National Liberation Movement, Fatah, met in Tunis 15-18 March under brother Abu-'Ammar [Yasir 'Arafat] and in the presence of all its members.

The Central Committee listened to a detailed report brother Abu-'Ammar submitted on the political situation in general and the situation having to do with the settlement process in light of the Israeli intransigence and procrastination in implementing the agreement [not further identified]. In his report, brother Abu- 'Ammar reviewed all the meetings and contacts that were held on the leadership level in the Arab and international arena, and the economic, political, diplomatic agreements that were concluded in the interest of the Palestinian people, the PLO, and the Palestinian National Authority [PNA].

The brother Central Committee members charged with tasks in the PNA submitted detailed reports on the nature of the tasks they have been entrusted to carry out, the progress of their work, the achievements realized, the difficulties and obstacles that were overcome, and those which still exist in view of the obstructions Israel places on the path of the peace process.

The Central Committee held discussions on political, economic, security, and social issues and on the negotiations process and the efforts exerted in this respect, taking into consideration the policy of bypassing the timetable to which the Israeli Government has committed itself to reach a conditional agreement that phases out the interim stage, with all that this entails in terms of premeditated procrastination policy. The Central Committee also condemned the flagrant violation of the agreement through the practices which have reached the point of a siege and isolation, the refusal to implement the second part of the Declaration of Princples [DOP] on the redeployment of the Israeli army and the withdrawal from populated centers in order to hold the general Palestinian legislative elections, the non-release of thousands of our detainees, the expansion of settlements and the establishment of new ones, and the actions to isolate and judaize Jerusalem, and to forcibly and in advance impose the features of the final Israeli solution on the ground to prevent the Palestinian people from achieving their objective of establishing an independent Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital.

Reviewing the movement's domestic situation, the Fatah Central Committee stressed adherence to the national constants and legitimate, inalienable rights, including the rights to repatriation, self-determination, and the establishment of the Palestinian state with holy Jerusalem as its capital. Those constants constitute the firm foundation of the unity of Fatah movement's position and of the structure of the movement's institutions, central offices, and all Fatah cadres throughout the PNA areas, the remainder of the occupied Palestinian West Bank, and the diaspora.

The Central Committee stressed the importance of Fatah's role and cohesiveness. It underlined the need for rallying around the movement's strategic objectives and its earnest endeavor to achieve the current objectives reflecting the requirements of the current militant stage, at which the PNA stands as a prominent example. This is in view of the movement's leading role and responsibility at the PNA and the PLO.

In light of the discussions that were held on Palestinian, Arab, and international issues, the Central Committee adopted the following decisions and orientations:

1. In the political field and the peace process: The Fatah Central Committee dwelt upon the Israeli violations of the DoP and Israel's attempts to impose the status quo, thus posing a threat to the overall peace process and its credibility. This requires that an international and Arab position be adopted to rescue the peace process in view of the difficulty of continuing the negotiations process as a result of the Israeli practices. Concerning Jerusalem, Fatah reiterates its constant position that Jerusalem is the capital of the state of Palestine and that it is an indivisible part of the Palestinian territories occupied in 1967. Israel's attempts to change the geographical and demographic features of the city, the policies of isolating and besieging the city and obstructing the work of the national institutions, and the attempts to Judaize the city and expand settlement activity around it are glaring attempts to unilaterally impose the status quo by force. At the same time, these practices are a glaring violation of the international legitimacy and UN resolutions.

Settlements: The Palestinian position will continue to firmly reject the Israeli settlement activity, considering it a hostile act contravening all UN resolutions. Our movement calls on the international community to pressure Israel into stopping its settlement activity immediately as a prelude to dismantling settlements in accordance with the Security Council resolutions and relevant agreements.

Prisoners: The simplest principles of commitment to the peace process and the DOP require the release of all prisoners. While greeting these prisoners' heroic deeds and steadfastness, the Central Committee emphasizes the need to release them without hesitation and without engaging in any bargaining or exchange deals.

Closure and Separation: The Central Committee announces its rejection of the policy of isolating the Palestinian territories from the outside world, a policy Israel is practicing occasionally under security pretexts within the framework of the collective punishment, which is rejected by international law and which conflicts with human rights. We do not object to Israel's closure of the borders that existed in 1967 and to political, economic, and security separation. We demand that the international community pressure Israel into opening the borders with Egypt and Jordan without any placing any obstacles hampering the movement of individuals and the establishment of trade relations, and into preventing Israel from swallowing West Bank lands under the pretext of separation and closure, something which is categorically rejected by the Palestinian people, considering it an Israeli attempt to demarcate borders unilaterally through applying a de facto policy.

Based on the above, and in view of these dangers, which are threatening the homeland and confirming the ill intentions of the Israeli policy and its real tendencies and failure to abide by the principles of the peace process and the DoP, the Central Committee has decided to keep this round of meetings open and to intensify contacts with the two cosponsors of the [Madrid] conference and with Arab and international parties in order to explain the dangers of the Israeli policy that is procrastinating and obstructing the peace process, and to adopt the appropriate decisions on the entire settlement process in the light of these contacts.

The Central Committee has dwelt on the challenges posed by the Israeli behavior and the statements that threaten the entire peace process. This prompted the Central Committee to take the necessary measures so the Palestinian people along with their Arab brethren can shoulder their responsibilities and work for the realization of their national and pan-Arab goals, foremost of which is full national independence of our Palestinian people.

2. In the Palestinian field, the need to preserve the PLO and its establishments, especially the Executive Committee in order to serve the Palestinian people and their interests inside and outside the homeland: We must stress the role of the PLO Executive Committee in its capacity as the terms of reference of the PNA. The realization of our national goals in the upcoming stage and the confrontation of the obstacles impeding our struggle require boosting national unity among all the national and Islamic political forces. They also require working out proper frameworks that would secure the launching of a dialogue, which is considered the only

path to reaching an understanding and dealing with differences and hardships in all the issues related to the future of our people and the current peace process.

The Central committee set up a committee to launch full national dialogue with all factions and forces within the framework of the PLO—a dialogue that will unite forces as a first step to unite the confrontation of the schemes seeking to liquidate our people and deprive them of establishing a state with its capital in holy Jerusalem.

In the Arab domain, the Central Committee stresses the importance of Arab coordination among the Arab cordon states involved in the peace process, in particular, and with the rest of Arab states, in general. Efforts must be exerted to work out a unified Arab stand to confront the dangers surrounding the Arab nation. This makes it necessary to hold an Arab summit that restores to the Arab scene the spirit of Arab solidarity that will turn a new leaf in inter-Arab relations and secure a unified, cohesive, and integrated position in confrontation of the political and economic campaigns targeting the Arab nation and the Palestinian people in particular.

Finally, the Central Committee would like to extend its best regards and thanks to sisterly Tunisia, to its struggling president His Excellency Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, and to the Tunisian people and our cause and for their continued care and the principled position adhering to the national and pan-Arab causes of our nation. [sentence as heard]

'Abd-al-Rahim on Tunis Meetings, 'Abbas

JN2003161895 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1218 GMT 20 Mar 95

[Telephone interview with al-Tayyib 'Abd-al-Rahim, secretary general of the Presidency in the Palestinian Authority, in Cairo, by unidentified correspondent, in the studio, from the "Today's Events" program—live]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Correspondent] Al-Tayyib 'Abd-al-Rahim, good evening.

['Abd-al-Rahim] Good evening.

[Correspondent] At a late hour last night, a statement was issued by the National Authority, and there was a decision to form a higher committee for national dialogue. Will you please give us some idea about this committee and the significance of its formation at this particular time?

['Abd-al-Rahim] There is no doubt that the recent meetings of the Fatal Central Committee and the PLO Executive Committee were necessary in view of the obstacles the Israeli Government has been placing to prevent progress on the Palestinian track and the implementation of the second stage of the Declaration of Principles [DOP] accord. The Fatah Central Committee and the PLO Executive Committee were unanimous on the need to enhance national unity by holding a dialogue with the various factions inside and outside the framework of the PLO Executive Committee in order to confront Israel's intransigence and obstacles with a unified Palestinian position and to force Israel to implement its commitments.

In this regard, the meetings of the two committees discussed the issue of national unity and the proposed dialogue with the Palestinian political forces, particularly with those outside the homeland. Therefore, they formed a committee that includes brother Abu-al-Adib [Salim al-Za'nun], brother Abu-al-Lutf [Faruq Qaddumi], and brother Hani al-Hasan to hold such a dialogue with these forces outside the homeland.

Undoubtedly, there were three basic issues under discussion. The first was the political situation. Brother President Abu-'Ammar [Yasir 'Arafat] reviewed all the angles of the political situation, as well as the stumbling blocks that have created a crisis on the Palestinian track as a result of Israel's policy of procrastination and its attempts to disavow the DOP accord or what is called the Oslo Agreement. This attempt is being rejected by everybody. Therefore, we have urged the two sponsors of the [Madrid] conference and all peace-loving forces, including Arab countries, European countries, nonaligned countries, and the two sponsors of the conference, to play their role in confronting these obstacles created by the Israeli Government to prevent the implementation of the DOP accord.

[Correspondent] Al-Tayyib 'Abd-al-Rahim, in light of the meetings of the Palestinian leadership and the National Authority in Tunis, it was clear that stress was placed on the negotiating option, and there was a change in the team that was running the negotiations. Mahmud 'Abbas, alias Abu-Mazin, was appointed as a supervisor of the higher committee for negotiations. What does this change mean?

['Abd-al-Rahim] In fact, brother Abu-Mazin was the supervisor of the negotiations file. For one reason or another, brother Abu- Mazin left that issue recently. However, the PLO Executive Committee and the Fatah Central Committee agreed that brother Abu-Mazin should resume his supervision of the negotiations file. This does not mean any change. It was just a call on Abu-Mazin to resume the responsibility he had formerly shouldered effectively.

[Correspondent] Al-Tayyib 'Abd-al- Rahim: The meetings of the Palestinian leadership clearly led to the emergence of currents and so-called hawks and doves in the Fatah Central Committee and the PLO Executive Committee. Do you believe that the option of negotiations was a victory for the doves in these two committees, in order to implement the peace agreement and convince other parties that negotiations are thus far the best option?

['Abd-al-Rahim] Brother, I object to the hawks and doves classification. In the Executive and Central Committees there was a consensus that Israel is responsible for the impasse and deadlock on the Palestinian track. As a Central Committee member who followed up on the Executive Committee meetings, I believe, from what I heard and understood at these meetings, that there were no hawks or doves; there were only interpretations.

One interpretation said Israel does not want to implement the agreement; another advocated suspending the negotiations to cause a shock. However, the overwhelming majority stressed the need to continue the negotiations and remain committed to the peace process in order to achieve our legitimate rights.

In fact, none of the brothers called for going back on the Oslo agreement or ending the negotiations. What you call the hawks side said: Let us suspend the negotiations for a specific period. No one called for ending the negotiations. Hence, I wonder about the statements attributed to some brothers abroad who called for ending the negotiations. In fact, there was almost complete consensus that we should continue our commitment to the peace process and our support for the Palestinian National Authority [PNA] in its capacity as the only Palestinian authority. There was also a consensus that the PLO is the terms of reference of the PNA, and that all resources and peace-loving forces should be pooled to pressure the Israeli side into stopping its evasion of the DOP and removing these obstacles.

[Correspondent] We have heard that the PNA will hold its next meeting in Jericho. When will it meet in Janin?

['Abd-al-Rahim] In Janin?

[Correspondent] Yes.

['Abd-al-Rahim] I believe this is premature. However, after implementing the part related to the Israeli withdrawal, or Israeli forces redeployment, and elections, the PNA can hold its meetings anywhere in the liberated territories it deems appropriate.

[Correspondent] Is the Janin option close?

['Abd-al-Rahim] This proposal was meant to break the deadlock on the Palestinian track. It was proposed that we take over Janin and Bethlehem because they are linked to the Jericho area. Janin is linked to Jericho from the direction of Tubas, and Bethlehem is also linked to the Jericho area. This can take place according to a timetable. It, however, does not mean that we can take over Janin only, or, as some Palestinian opposition factions claim, only Gaza and Jericho. In other words, Janin and Bethlehem will be part of a timetable for Israeli Army redeployment throughout the West Bank. So, let us begin with Janin and Bethlehem.

As I told you, however, the Israeli side is trying to evade this issue despite the fact that it committed itself to reaching an agreement. In this phase, we should prepare our papers and comprehend things well in order to implement the second part of the DOP.

In this regard, I would like to focus on this point that was dealt with by the media: In fact, there was praise for the PNA's performance. In a short period of time, the PNA has managed to build institutions on the liberated territories. Naturally, only God is perfect. We listened to a great deal of advice from the brothers. They unanimously lauded the PNA's performance and said that the donor states did not fulfill even a small portion of their pledges. This has obstructed some activities of the PNA for lack of financial aid. There was also a consensus on the need to contact all parties in order to urge the donor states to fulfill their promises.

[Correspondent] Thank you, al-Tayyib 'Abd-al-Rahim, secretary general of the [Palestinian] Presidency, who is now in Cairo.

['Abd-al-Rahim] I am now in Cairo for medical reasons only.

[Correspondent] I wish you a speedy recovery.

['Abd-al-Rahim] I will head for Gaza tomorrow, God willing.

[Correspondent] Speedy recovery. Thank you Abu-al-'Abd [al-Tayyib 'Abd-al-Rahim].

Hamas Said Holding 'Secret' Dialogue With 'Arafat

JN2003125795 Paris AL-MUHARRIR in Arabic 20 Mar 95 p 2

["Exclusive" report]

[FBIS Translated Text] The silence the Hamas Movement is keeping these days—in addition to its freezing military and political activity—is not coming out of thin air. Some Palestinian sources say that a secret dialogue has been going on for a while between the movement and the Palestinian Authority. This dialogue focuses on some broad lines—termed Palestinian constants by both sides—which deal with the issue of democracy, the unity of the people inside and outside the territories, political pluralism, adoption of a party law, and the right of Hamas and other opposition forces to share power.

The same sources confirm that Hamas agreed to freeze all its military activities inside self-rule areas if the [Palestinian] Authority agrees to give it no less that 40 percent of the positions and jobs in the self-rule administrations from the level of ministry secretary general, down. Hamas stressed that it does not want to take part in higher echelons of power at this stage. This confirms reports, or at least some of them, that Hamas has not carried out any noteworthy actions since the bombing of a bus in central Tel Aviv some months ago.

It is worth mentioning that earlier this month Engineer 'Imad al- Faluji, a well-known Hamas leader, revealed a new political program the movement is finalizing. This program includes many new and important stands, including a Hamas agreement to a truce with the Hebrew state for a period of between 5 to 10 years. During this time, Israel would withdraw from the West Bank and Gaza Strip, remove the settlers, and withdraw from East Jerusalem. The program also includes holding democratic elections for the Palestinian legislative council which, in turn, will elect the president of the Authority.

What is of interest, in light of reports about a secret dialogue between Hamas and the Palestinian Authority, is the movement's refusal to further develop the 10 opposition factions and its refusal to join the Palestinian National Grouping whose formation was recently announced in the occupied territories. This reflects Hamas' desire not to upset 'Arafat or stand against him and to keep the road open for maneuvering.

Algeria

Journalist Assassinated by 'Terrorists'

LD2103123595 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1200 GMT 21 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The security services announced that Ali Boukerbache, age 53, the director of "Media-TV", was assassinated this morning by a terrorist group as he stopped at the intersection which links Dergana and Rouiba, east of Algiers.

The victim was a former journalist with EL-DJOUMHOURIA daily and he was driving his private car when he was taken by surprise by the terrorist group.

The victim was the manager of the Media-TV company whose main business is information by video.

FIS Condemns Violence Against Women, Children

MM2103125995 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 20 Mar 95 p 4

[Unattributed report: "Algerian Salvation Front: Our Ranks Are Coherent; We Condemn Killing of Women and Children"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] London, AL-HAYAH—The Islamic Salvation Front [FIS] has issued a statement stressing "the cohesion of its ranks" and condemning "the criminal actions" committed against women, children, and the elderly.

The statement said: "The FIS, while blessing the appointment of a national leader for the Islamic Salvation Army [AIS], stresses the cohesion of its ranks and the rallying of its members—of both its political and military wings—around the historic leadership represented in Shaykhs Abassi Madani and Ali Belhadj. It also denounces and strongly denies the tendentious rumors and lies carried by some media services to distort its image, but it is impossible for them to achieve their aims."

The newspaper LA TRIBUNE said two days ago that a large number of AIS (the FIS' military wing) leaders had joined the Armed Islamic Group in protest at Madani Merzak's appointment as leader of the AIS.

The statement added: "In fulfillment of its principles and out of its commitment to religious objectives, the FIS condemns and dissociated itself from all the criminal actions committed against a group of women, girls, elderly people, and children. And it points out that these actions are relentlessly committed by intelligence services, which falsely accuse the armed Islamic groups of committing them.

"A regime refusing to form an independent committee to launch an investigation into the Serkadji prison massacre, which claimed over 200 lives, is capable of committing the ugliest of crimes against the Algerian people and of slandering the Islamists unjustly and falsely." [passage omitted]

Zeroual Announces Series of Appointments

LD2003165495 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1600 GMT 20 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] In a statement by the State Presidency, it is announced that Liamine Zeroual, the head of state, made a series of appointments today.

Said Bouchair has been appointed chairman of the Constitutional Council, and Taha Taya has been appointed member of the Constitutional Council. These appointments are within those made by the head of state. Mahfoud Laacheb becomes secretary general of the government, and Abdelkader Benmaarouf becomes chairman of the Audit Council, replacing Ahmed Ounadjela, who has been recalled for other duties.

In this context, it is worth mentioning that the new chairman of the Constitutional Council, the secretary general of the government, and the chairman of the Audit Council were received by the head of state today.

On a suggestion of the prime minister, the head of state carried out the following appointments:

Mrs. Aicha Hania Semichi becomes secretary of state to the prime minister in charge of national solidarity and family; Mohamed Ouadah becomes director of coordination of territorial security; and Ali Tounsi becomes director general of national security. [passage omitted]

Cherif Denies Plans for Self-Defense Committees

LD1703193595 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1830 GMT 17 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] As he promised, Mr. Abderrahmane Meziane Cherif, minister of the interior and local authorities, told a meeting of the citizens of Djelfa Province about the preliminary findings of the commission of enquiry into the revolt of prisoners at Serkadji. [passage omitted]

The interior minister denied that any law or project to establish self-defense committees is being studied. He indicated that the purpose of the municipal guards who have been appointed is to support the security forces and protect property.

Industry Minister on New National Energy Council

LD1903143995 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in French 0630 GMT 19 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] We now turn to the National Energy Council, established by presidential decree last week during a meeting of the council of ministers. What is this council, and what will its brief be? Industry and Energy Minister Amar Mekhloufi spoke to our reporter, Hamid Ghiles.

[Begin Mekhloufi recording] We have set up a National Energy Council, which will be responsible not only for initiating, but more importantly for monitoring and guiding the major energy issues—tomorrow's issues, those of prospection in the medium and especially in the long term, and also of such questions as energy supply and security. This is all the more important because, as a nation, we are primary producers of oil and gas—but primary oil and gas energy is non-renewable. Therefore, the country must be provided with tools for guidance, monitoring and assessment, so as to ensure that the country's prospects and strategies in the sphere of energy security and supply are, in the long term, well provided for and well ordered. [end recording]

Sonatrach, U.S. Company Discover New Oil Field

LD1803225595 Algiers ENTV Television Network in Arabic 1800 GMT 18 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Oil news: partnership has borne its first fruits. Black gold has been gushing forth since Sonatrach and [word indistinct] foreign companies signed contracts. The U.S. consortium Anadarko has made five discoveries since February 1994 in the rich region of Hassi-Messaoud. Hassi Abdou Aich reports:

[Aich] Sonatrach, the national oil company, and the Anardarko consortium have announced the discovery of a fifth oil field. The field is situated south of Hassi Berkine, 250 km from Hassi-Messaoud, right in the middle of the western region.

Eight fields of liquid oil were discovered in Algeria in 1994, including three by Sonatrach and five by its associated partners. The frequency of these discoveries is quite exceptional.

Furthermore, according to Anadarko, the reserves of oil shown to exist by these five discoveries are believed to amount to between 850 million and 1,250 million barrels. Extra drillings and data about the production will make it possible to determine precisely the total amount of the reserves.

Sonatrach has announced that it intends to produce some 30,000 barrels per day as early as next year. [passage omitted]

Egypt

Official Talks Between Sidqi, Gore Open in Cairo

NC2003155795 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1425 GMT 20 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Cairo, 20 Mar (MENA)—The official talks between Prime Minister Dr. 'Atif Sidqi and U.S. Vice President Al Gore opened at the Prime Minister's Office in Cairo this afternoon. After a brief meeting between Prime Minister Dr. Sidqi and Vice President Gore, members of the two delegations joined the talks.

Upon arrival at the Prime Minister's Office, Vice President Al Gore described his talks with President Mubarak this morning as very good. He added that he looks forward to holding important and constructive talks with Prime Minister Dr. Sidqi. [passage omitted]

The Egyptian-U.S. talks dealt with ways to consolidate bilateral cooperation on economic, foreign affairs, and technical issues.

Joint Committee Communique Issued

NC2003222995 Cairo MENA in Arabic 2100 GMT 20 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Cairo, 20 Mar (MENA)—Egypt and the United States have affirmed their mutual interest in achieving peace and stability in the Middle East.

The two countries also affirmed their interest in consolidating the existing bilateral relations and the importance of their economic dialogue for promoting policies of fair economic development, creating job opportunities in Egypt, and developing broad economic ties based on trade, investment, mutual trade benefits, and the flow of aid. This is stated in a joint communique issued after President Mubarak's meeting with U.S. Vice President Al Gore today. [passage omitted]

The following is the text of the joint Egyptian-U.S. communique:

After the meeting today between Egyptian President Husni Mubarak and U.S. Vice President Al Gore Jr., the following joint communique was issued: The president and the U.S. vice president agree that their countries have mutual interests in peace and stability in the Middle East and seek to consolidate their profound and strong bilateral relations. They also realize the importance of stronger economic development in Egypt to serve their citizens and they recognize the importance of the progress achieved since they last met last fall in the bilateral initiative for economic growth and development.

Since then, high-level meetings have been held in Washington and Cairo and intense discussions held covering many agencies of both governments. In light of these successful meetings, President Husni Mubarak and U.S. Vice President Al Gore, on behalf of U.S. President Clinton, decided that a high-level economic dialogue within this partnership will:

1. Promote the policies for fair economic growth and create job opportunities in Egypt, especially in the private sector;

2. Develop broad economic relationships focusing on trade, investment, and mutual trade benefits, as well as on the flow of aid;

3. Explore ways to organize the current U.S. aid so that it can have an enhanced positive impact on Egyptian economic growth.

In his meetings with Egyptian and U.S. businessmen, Al Gore said prosperity and peace are interconnected and are necessary for the Middle East. He affirmed that a strong economy in Egypt is important and essential for the Egyptian people and for the Egyptian leadership in this region.

He noted that President Mubarak showed serious interest in the U.S.-Egyptian partnership initiative for economic growth and development, which could serve as a good stimulant to attract investment, advance economic growth, and create new job opportunities in Egypt.

He also noted that the U.S. President has approved the establishment of a regional bank in the Middle East to help build the economy within the framework of peace for the region's nations.

4. Consolidate technological and scientific cooperation and promote the application of modern technology in the Egyptian private sector;

5. Implement a bilateral agreement to encourage and organize bilateral cooperation on science and technology;

6. Promote human resources and individual productivity;

7. Rally support for continuous development and environmental- protection policies in order to maximize economic growth, encourage and facilitate cooperation between the two countries' private sectors, and to provide a basis at the grassroots level for a strong and lasting relationship.

[Words indistinct] within the Egyptian-U.S. Joint Committee which has been founded for this purpose. Both governments have appointed a cochairman for this committee.

This joint committee will include ministers and members not at sub-ministerial level from the Egyptian and U.S. Governments. It will meet regularly at least once a year and the venue will alternate between Egypt and the United States. The first meeting will be held today. The joint committee will be supported by three subcommittees:

a) the subcommittee on economic policy, trade, investment, and foreign finance;
b) the subcommittee for developing human and technological resources;
c) the subcommittee for continuous development and the environment.

The subcommittees will begin work in the next two days. In addition, an independent commission comprised of senior executives from the private sector will be formed soon to provide the joint committee and the subcommittees with the private sector's view on economic and trade ties between Egypt and the United States.

The partnership focuses its efforts on three sectors of interest to both sides:

a) Technology transfer and competition;
b) Development of Upper Egypt;
c) The environment.

As a start, the two sides have agreed on eight initiatives and the subcommittees will follow up on them:

1. Establishing a center for good quality and technology upgrading;
2. Linking the business community through the information highway;
3. The Asyut establishment for trade and industrial business will work with the trade technology commission to serve small industrial and trade projects.
4. Training teachers;
5. Teaching women;
6. Training workers;
7. Reducing the lead level in Cairo;
8. Environmental tourism;

The two sides envisage that the partnership will be able to produce early results in these important fields.

Western 'Military Plan' Against Islamists Reported

NC2103130495 Cairo AL-SHA'B in Arabic 14 Mar 95 p 1

[Report by Mahmud Bakri]

[FBIS Translated Text] AL-SHA'B has learned that the United States, France, Italy, and Germany have completed preparations for the first joint military plan to interfere against the Islamists in the North African countries under the pretext of safeguarding U.S. and European interests from the rigid fundamentalist danger. The plan involves agreement on the use of advanced missile defense systems to protect the Mediterranean coasts and of offensive missiles to confront the fundamentalist Islamists should they reach power in any of the North African countries and the use of mobile military bases that basically rely on the navy to ensure rapid and emergency intervention to quell any violent movements in the region.

The military plan consists of more than 15 clauses. The secret meetings to draw up this plan, which were held at a U.S. military base, lasted for more than six months. The plan was completed before NATO declared its intention to hold dialogue with the four African countries of Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia, and Mauritania, in addition to Israel, to confront the Islamists in these countries.

Meanwhile, THE WASHINGTON POST reported that U.S. President Bill Clinton last week signed secret instructions defining the priorities for the U.S. intelligence agencies so that they may focus their efforts on the new threats that cropped up after the end of the Cold

War. It should be recalled that in the past few days John Deutch was appointed as new CIA director to succeed James Woolsey.

Israeli Knesset Delegation Arrives for Talks

Meeting With Mubarak Detailed

NC1903164595 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1535 GMT 19 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 19 Mar (MENA)—Following President Husni Mubarak's reception of an Israeli Knesset delegation today, Dr. Muhammad 'Abdallah, chairman of the People's Assembly Foreign Relations Committee, said President Mubarak explained in full details Egypt's position and view on the need to expedite the peace process on the Palestinian-Israeli track.

Dr. 'Abdallah added that President Mubarak clarified to the Israeli delegation that Egypt supports the efforts for a comprehensive and lasting peace in this region and that peace is the basic ingredient to achieve security and stability in this region.

Chairman of the Israeli Knesset's Foreign Relations Committee Ori Or said the delegation and President Mubarak discussed the peace process and ways to advance it, as well as ways to consolidate relations between Egypt and Israel. He added that President Mubarak asserted his commitment to the peace process and his continued support for the parties concerned with peace.

Ori Or said President Mubarak inquired about developments in the occupied territories and the Israeli forces' redeployment. Or added: We also talked about our security requirements and the importance of the time factor to improve our relations with the Palestinians to reduce our losses and establish grounds for confidence between us.

He emphasized that this will not be possible without Egypt's cooperation with our government, describing the delegation's meeting with President Mubarak as "open and candid."

Commenting on the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, Or said: We support our government on this issue and there is no disagreement between the Israeli Knesset's coalition and the Israeli Government. He added: Peace will prevail the entire region one day and then we will sign the treaty.

Or noted that peace for the Palestinians is very important, that peace is the key to the peace process in the region, absence of peace will threaten all the region's countries, and that we must fight the waves of extremism that threatens all the region's states.

Or commented on the Israeli forces' redeployment in the West Bank and its association with the peace process under the Palestinian-Israeli agreement. He said: Establishing security is a first step and the forces redeployment comes afterward. When we see that the Palestinian side has exerted maximum effort to stem violence, then the process of the Israeli forces' redeployment will commence.

Concluding his statement, Or called for not linking the Palestinian elections and the Israeli forces' redeployment. He also called for a compromise on the Israeli forces redeployment and holding elections, noting that the elections will boost President Yasir 'Arafat's position to confront all forms of extremism in the occupied territories.

Assembly Official Receives Members

NC2003051595 Cairo MENA in Arabic 2155 GMT 19 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 19 Mar (MENA)—Dr. Muhammad 'Abdallah, chairman of the People's Assembly Foreign Relations Committee, this evening received the Israeli Knesset delegation members led by Ori Or, chairman of the Knesset Foreign Relations Committee. During the meeting, the discussions focused on the importance of strengthening the means of achieving peace in the Middle East and on Israeli withdrawal from all the occupied Arab territories so that the region may enjoy stability.

'Abdallah emphasized the Egyptian viewpoint adhering to peace and insisting that peace should be comprehensive and fair and based on the Security Council resolutions and international law. He said that Egypt considers peace a strategic goal and the Egyptian leadership is exerting efforts to achieve it. He pointed out that in line with its strategic concept of peace Egypt believes that a balance of forces is a guarantee of peace, noting the initiative that President Husni Mubarak declared in 1990 to make the region free of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction. He stressed that Egypt's line is clear and seeks a fair and comprehensive peace and stability and that it refuses to allow the region to enter into a nuclear arms race "proceeding from our view of the future and aspirations for a better future of peace and development."

Independent Deputies Denounce Visit

NC2003213295 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1530 GMT 20 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 20 Mar (MENA)—People's Assembly Speaker Dr. Ahmad Fathi Surur has emphasized that engaging in a dialogue, not keeping a distance or turning our backs to those who disagree with us, is the serious way for expressing our views and affirming our rights. He pointed out the importance of using a sound argument and reason to prove our rights.

Dr. Surur was commenting on remarks by independent Deputy Fikri al-Jazzar about yesterday's visit to the Assembly by an Israeli Knesset delegation at the invitation of the People's Assembly. Dr. Surur noted that holding a dialogue with the Israeli delegation is a positive point because we represent the Egyptian people and the delegation members need to listen to the people's views and relay them back to the Knesset. He noted that the Assembly's reception of the Israeli delegation had come at the repeated request of the Knesset after having been postponed several times. He added that the Knesset's Foreign Relations Committee had requested a visit by its members to the People's Assembly. After consulting with the chairman of the Assembly's Foreign Relations Committee, I approved the visit, he added.

Dr. Surur pointed out that the decision to approve the visit is out of respect for the principle of legitimacy, which Egypt is eager to safeguard, particularly since Egypt has concluded a peace treaty with Israel and is eager to achieve a just and comprehensive peace. Egypt, he pointed out, started the peace march during the time of the late President Anwar al-Sadat, who travelled to their home grounds to present them with the Egyptian and Arab views. His visit was described as highly courageous, he added. Later on, Jordan signed a peace treaty with Israel, the Declaration of Principles between the PLO and Israel was signed, and Syria and Israel started peace talks, he added.

Dr. Surur stressed that his meeting with the Israeli parliamentary delegation was a courtesy meeting, during which he briefed the delegation on the position of the opposition and independent deputies in the Assembly who reject this visit. He added that he had not hidden the views of the opposition and independent deputies from the Israeli delegation. He added: I told them that we have hawks and doves among the deputies, exactly like you do. Dr. Surur noted that Deputy Muhammad al-Badrashini had protested against the visit and that he had advised al-Badrashini to attend the Foreign Relations Committee's meeting. Deputy al- Badrashini did indeed attend the meeting and was very harsh with them. He expressed clearly the opposition's views and was even extreme in his opposition. Deputy Abu-al-Fadl al-Jizawi also condemned the visit, Dr. Surur added.

For his part, Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Dr. Muhammad 'Abdallah stated that a journalist had asked him about his Israeli guests. He added: I told him that they are not my guests, but the Assembly's guests, who made the visit after repeated requests. Addressing the Assembly members, Dr. 'Abdallah added: I wish you were had been present at the meeting to see what went on there and how the Egyptian views were presented. It is all recorded in full in the minutes of the meeting. He noted that the discussion at the meeting was frank and straightforward and that emphasis had been placed on the need to achieve a just and comprehensive peace in the region.

The independent deputies in the People's Assembly issued a statement denouncing the visit of the Israeli parliamentary delegation and regretting the delegation's meeting with three of them. The three deputies are Muhammad al-Badrashini, Muna Makram 'Ubayd, and Abu-al-Fadl al-Jizawi.

Following a debate on this matter, the Assembly resumed discussion of its agenda.

Al-Baz Meets With Delegation

NC2003201895 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1900 GMT 20 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 20 Mar (MENA)—Dr. Usamah al-Baz, Foreign Ministry first under secretary and director of the President's Office for Political Affairs, met this evening with the Israeli Knesset delegation currently visiting Cairo, led by Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee Ori Or.

Dr. al-Baz explained to the Israeli delegation Egypt's stand on the treaty banning weapons of mass destruction and Egypt's efforts to advance the peace process and overcome the obstacles to a comprehensive peace in the region.

Delegation Leaves Cairo

NC2103063895 Cairo MENA in Arabic 2330 GMT 20 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 20 Mar (MENA)—The Israeli Knesset foreign relations delegation, headed by Ori Or, left Cairo tonight after a visit of several days to Egypt during which the delegation was received by President Husni Mubarak.

The delegation also held talks with People's Assembly Speaker Fathi Surur and Dr. Muhammad 'Abdallah, chairman of the People's Assembly Foreign Relations Committee.

Israel's Beilin Arrives; To Meet Omani Minister

NC2103063995 Cairo MENA in Arabic 2332 GMT 20 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 20 Mar (MENA)—Israeli Deputy Foreign Minister Yosi Beilin arrived in Cairo tonight on a visit to Egypt for several days.

He said he will meet tomorrow with Yusuf Bin-'Alawi Bin-'Abdallah, Omani minister of state for foreign affairs, to discuss relations between Israel and the Sultanate of Oman.

Jordan's Bin-Shakir Arrives for Joint Meeting

NC1603170495 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 1500 GMT 16 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister Dr. 'Atif Sidqi today received Jordanian Prime Minister al-Sharif Zayd Bin-Shakir, who is now in Egypt on a two-day visit to chair the meetings of the higher Jordanian-Egyptian joint committee. Al-Sharif said the committee will discuss the launching of joint projects in various fields. Prime Minister Sidqi said the committee meeting, which will open tonight, is the continuation of a meeting held in Jordan in May to support bilateral relations in the fields of transport, communication, tourism, economy, and others.

Dr. Sidqi stressed that Jordanian-Egyptian cooperation comes amid important Arab developments. This, he said, requires that Arab cooperation be strengthened. He pointed out that the most important project the committee will discuss is the prevention of double taxation to encourage investment. The committee will also work out agreements on the final formulas of some projects, he said.

Committee Begins Meetings

NC1603215695 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 1830 GMT 16 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The meetings of the Higher Jordanian-Egyptian Joint Committee began in Cairo this evening. Dr. 'Atif Sidqi and al-Sharif Zayd Bin-Shakir led the Egyptian and Jordanian sides to the talk. The committee will discuss the new dimensions of cooperation between Egypt and Jordan in the economic, trade, and technical domains. It will also review the report compiled by the preparatory committee concerning the implementation of the joint cooperation projects. [passage omitted]

At the outset of the meeting, Dr. Sidqi welcomed the Jordanian prime minister and his delegation. He stressed the need to promote joint Arab action and coordinate efforts among Egypt, Jordan, and the Palestinians within the context of regional economic cooperation. He also stressed the importance of forming a suitable mechanism for this cooperation. He reiterated Egypt's welcome of the Jordanian-Israeli accord. Dr. Sidqi called for promoting joint Arab action through the Arab league.

For his part, the Jordanian prime minister called for confronting the international challenges. He stressed the need to establish Arab relations on clear bases that would express the Arab nation's interests and restore Arab solidarity.

Dr. 'Atif Sidqi hosted a dinner in honor of the Jordanian prime minister and his delegation tonight.

The Joint Committee will hold its final session tomorrow morning.

Higher Committee Issues Statement

NC1703161795 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1415 GMT 17 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 17 Mar (MENA)—The Joint Egyptian-Jordanian Higher Committee has affirmed the need for political coordination between the two countries regarding the regional and international situation, issues of common interest, regional and international developments, and the impact of these developments on the Arab nation.

In a final statement on the work of its 12th session which concluded in Cairo today under the chairmanship of Egyptian Prime Minister Dr. 'Atif Sidqi and Jordanian Prime Minister al-Sharif Zayd-bin-Shakir, the committee said the two countries' stands corresponded on various topical issues. In this regard, Egypt welcomed the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty as an important step on the road to a comprehensive and permanent peace in the region.

The two sides noted the importance of the implementation of the agreements reached on the Israeli-Palestinian track. They also noted the importance of work for the successful conclusion of the negotiations on the Syrian-Israeli and Lebanese-Israeli tracks.

The statement affirmed that the two sides will continue their efforts to support the Arab League, achieve Arab reconciliation, and clear the Middle East of all weapons of mass destruction to ensure equitable security for all regional parties, including Israel, by the accession of all the states of the region without exception to the treaties in the fields of nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons.

The Egyptian and Jordanian sides believe that Iraq has taken important steps in the right direction toward implementing the Security Council resolutions. They expressed confidence that the completion of these steps will remove the remaining problems obstructing confidence-building among the parties concerned. They affirmed the importance of easing the suffering of the fraternal Iraqi people and achieving stability in the region.

The statement affirmed that the two countries' foreign ministries will continue to coordinate on political and economic issues in the service of their common interests.

The joint committee expressed the desire of the two countries to increase the volume of trade between them. It decided to convene the joint trade committee in the fall. The Egyptian and Jordanian sides affirmed the importance of concluding an agreement to avoid double taxation to serve the investment activity of businessmen in the two countries and encourage them to establish joint projects. They also affirmed the importance of drafting an agreement on encouraging and protecting investment in the two countries.

It was decided to hold a meeting of the joint planning committee within two months. The higher committee noted the importance of establishing a joint branch [shu'bah] to coordinate between the representatives of the private sector in the two countries in implementation of the committee's resolution at its previous session. It called for measures to facilitate the passage of the trucks of the two countries, regardless of the country of origin of the goods loaded on these trucks. The committee recommended that a joint study be undertaken on the possibility of cooperation in providing and disseminating feedback information and exchanging visits to electronic industries installations preliminary to drawing up an integrated plan for these industries.

The joint committee expressed satisfaction with the progress in the work to link the electricity grids of five countries, in which Egypt and Jordan are participating. It called for the completion of this project before the end of 1997. It welcomed the implementation of joint projects to manufacture electric equipment and of networks for the supply and distribution of electricity. The committee decided to continue the studies on the possibility of supplying Jordan with Egyptian natural gas. It expressed satisfaction with the level achieved by the maritime line between Nuwaybi' and al- 'Aqabah for the transport of goods and citizens, especially during the al-hajj season.

The committee recommended the quick signing of the executive program for the years 1995-1997 on cooperation in the fields of education, tourism, culture, information, youth, and sports. It called for energizing cooperation between the two countries' news agencies and for implementing the space cooperation and labor force agreements signed between them. It also called for the formation of a mechanism for organizing the entry of the labor force in the two countries and for giving workers without work permits ample opportunity to correct their status.

The committee affirmed the importance of consolidating cooperation on protecting the environment by exchanging expertise, information, and legislation on the effects of industry and power installations. It affirmed the importance of cooperation in seismology and exchanging agricultural expertise and research. The committee decided to study Egypt's request to be a conduit for the passage of telegraphic traffic between the Arab countries and the world. It recommended the formation of a joint health committee to follow up the integration resolutions in the field of medicine.

The committee decided to convene its 13th session in Amman in September 1995.

Meeting Concludes; Outcome Discussed

NC1703150495 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1235 GMT 17 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 17 Mar (MENA)—The Joint Egyptian-Jordanian Higher Committee held its second and last meeting this morning under the chairmanship of Egyptian Prime Minister Dr. 'Atif Sidqi and Jordanian Prime Minister al-Sharif Zayd Bin-Shakir.

The two prime ministers held a short meeting at the office of Dr. Sidqi, attended by some ministers from the two sides, to review the outcome of yesterday's meeting before joining the members of the two delegations at the conference hall.

At the end of the meeting, Prime Ministers Sidqi and Bin-Shakir signed the final statement on the meetings of the current 12th session of the Higher Committee in Cairo.

On this occasion, Prime Minister Sidqi praised the strong relations between Egypt and Jordan and the constructive cooperation between the two countries in the various spheres. He affirmed the importance of boosting cooperation and coordination between them in the political, economic, social, cultural, and technical fields. He also affirmed that bilateral cooperation is proceeding with steady steps in these circumstances, which require firm cooperation among all the Arab states in the various spheres. He indicated that the Egyptian-Jordanian cooperation and coordination could serve as a model for inter-Arab cooperation in the interest of the Arab nation and countries. He called for adhering to the dates agreed upon regarding the meetings of the ministers or the joint sub-committees to achieve the hopes of the two fraternal peoples and countries for developing cooperation between them under the leadership of King Husayn and President Husni Mubarak.

Jordanian Prime Minister Bin-Shakir expressed his pride over the good relations between the two countries and over the strong relations between King Husayn and President Mubarak. He praised Egypt's positive role and its effective contribution to laying down the foundations of just peace in the region. He affirmed that Egypt is a driving force in this sphere. He described the Jordanian-Israeli treaty under which Jordan obtained all its rights as "a positive step on the road to just peace."

He expressed the hope that the brother Palestinians, Syrians, and Lebanon will regain all their rights and that the region's resources will be used for development and to ease sufferings. He affirmed that Jordan will do its utmost to implement the resolutions of the joint committee.

He appealed to the officials of the two countries to translate the text of the agreement into hopes, the effects of which will be felt by the two peoples in consolidating bilateral relations and the interests of the Arab nation.

Joint Egyptian-Omani Committee To Be Formed

NC1803144995 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1320 GMT 18 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 18 Mar (MENA)—A decision was made to form a joint Egyptian-Omani committee on the foreign ministers level to strengthen bilateral cooperation on all levels to serve the interests of the two fraternal peoples and maintain the existing coordination between the two countries on all levels. It has been decided that the committee will meet periodically in Muscat and Cairo and that the venue, date, and agenda of the first meeting will be fixed as soon as possible. Stating this, Information Minister Safwat al-Sharif added that President Husni Mubarak and His Majesty Sultan Qabus Bin-Sa'id of Oman resumed their meeting this morning before President Mubarak's departure and reviewed ways of strengthening bilateral cooperation between the two fraternal countries.

Al-Sharif said that President Mubarak expressed to his brother Sultan Qabus the Egyptian people's appreciation of the special relations that link them to the Sultanate of Oman and its wise leadership and their pride in enhancing cooperation between Egypt and Oman in various fields. He noted that members of the two delegations joined the meeting between President Mubarak and Sultan Qabus during which it was decided to form the joint Egyptian-Omani committee. Al-Sharif said that he and his Omani counterpart have agreed to hold a meeting of the joint information committee under them in Cairo in mid April.

Mubarak Chairs NPT Advisory Committee Meeting

NC1903095795 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0857 GMT 19 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 19 Mar (MENA)—President Muhammad Husni Mubarak this morning met with the members of the advisory committee charged with delineating Egypt's stand on the extension of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty [NPT].

Present at the meeting were Dr. 'Atif Sidqi, the prime minister; Safwat al-Sharif, minister of information; 'Amr Musa, minister of foreign affairs; Kamal al-Shadhili, minister of the People's Assembly and Consultative Council; Zaki Abu-'Amir, minister of state for the People's Assembly and Consultative Council; Dr. Zakariya 'Azmi, head of the Presidential Office; and Dr. Usamah al-Baz, director of the Presidential Office for Political Affairs.

The meeting was also attended by Dr. Ramzi al-Sha'ir, president of al-Zaqaziq University; Dr. Mufid Shihab, president of Cairo University; Dr. Muhammad 'Abdallah, chairman of the People's Assembly Foreign Relations Committee; Dr. 'Ali al-din Hilal, dean of Cairo University's economic and political science college; Dr. Sa'id al-Waqqaq, dean of Alexandria University's law college; Dr. Ahmad Rif'at, law professor at the University of Bani Suwayf; Dr. Nazli Mu'awwad, director of the political studies center at Cairo University; and Professor Mahmud Abazah.

Information Minister Comments

NC1903122995 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1125 GMT 19 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 19 Mar (MENA)—Information Minister Safwat al-Sharif, speaking after President Mubarak's meeting today with the advisory committee on the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty [NPT], stated that during the two-hour meeting President Mubarak stressed that Egypt's stance on dealing with the proposed alternatives and scenarios will be determined primarily by the extent to which they are in line with its supreme interests and national security. The president underlined Egypt's respect for international legitimacy and its eagerness to establish a Middle Eastern zone free of weapons of mass destruction. President Mubarak emphasized that Egypt's decision on the matter will proceed according to the constants dictated by Egypt's national interests. The president added that Egypt is a country of influence and that its decisions are based on an understanding, awareness, and assessment of the situation as dictated by the national conscience. These decisions, the president added, are not subject to one- upmanship or any kind of pressure. Egypt's views are understood by the majority of the world community and reflect the concerns of public opinion throughout the region, the president added.

The information minister explained that the advisers had reviewed the legal alternatives available as well as the probable scenarios when the matter comes up for a vote. They noted that Egypt's position rests on legal grounds outlined in the articles of the treaty and they underlined the need for Egypt to participate actively in the international conference on the treaty. During the meeting, arguments were put forward stressing Egypt's opposition to the proliferation of nuclear weapons, its support for the universality and continuation of the treaty, its respect for international legality, and its commitment to the provisions of international law and international treaties. Al-Sharif added that Egypt is against exempting any country in the region from signing and complying with the NPT. Egypt's position underlines its desire that the treaty be comprehensive and applied to all regional countries without exception in light of the peace that has been achieved, which hopefully will result in a comprehensive settlement, al-Sharif added.

The information minister added that the advisory committee's report included various views analyzing the technical aspects of the treaty, its practical application over the past 25 years, and the positive and negative issues resulting from international changes. The report also includes an analysis of the nuclear powers' obligations as outlined in the NPT and the extent to which these obligations are being honored at the international level.

Al-Sharif added that President Mubarak also reviewed a report prepared by the Egyptian Foreign Ministry on the same topic. Al- Sharif noted that the ministry's report and the report of the advisory committee are largely identical. He added that the president had asked the committee members to continue to follow up developments related to this matter. The president, he added, will meet again with the committee at an appropriate time to follow up on this issue.

German Foreign Minister Kinkel Visits

NC2003202095 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1825 GMT 20 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 20 Mar (MENA)—German Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel arrived in Cairo this evening on a visit to Egypt that will last several days. He will hold talks with Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa on bilateral relations and topics of mutual interest.

Musa, Kinkel Hold News Conference

NC2103042095 Cairo MENA in Arabic 2209 GMT 20 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 20 Mar (MENA)—Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa has reiterated that Egypt's stand on extending the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty [NPT] is known. He said: We are still waiting for Israel to come forward with its final stand on our proposals to move in the right direction to create a region free of weapons of mass destruction.

At a joint news conference with his German counterpart Klaus Kinkel following their talks, Musa said contacts are continuing and we hope that the EU will play a role commensurate with its standing in this issue.

He emphasized the importance of the potential European role in these circumstances that affect fundamental and important issues, noting that the EU can show its credibility by intervening in this situation.

Musa added that there is an Israeli nuclear program near our eastern border and the borders of Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon. He said this raises the question of why Israel is allowed to have a nuclear program outside the NPT while everyone else is asked to ratify the treaty. He added that such discrimination offends Arab dignity. This situation cannot continue because it has negative effects on public opinion and on the region's security.

Musa described his talks with his German counterpart as constructive and useful. He said they dealt with the Middle East peace process, the situation on various tracks of the Arab-Israeli talks, and the obstacles facing them. He added that the talks also dealt with the situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the NPT, cooperation among the Mediterranean countries, and relations between Egypt and Germany. The relations discussed were not confined to political and economic cooperation but also cover cultural cooperation.

He said President Husni Mubarak will receive the German foreign minister tomorrow, Tuesday.

For his part, Kinkel said he will participate in opening the Mubarak library, to which Germany has contributed.

Replying to a question, the German foreign minister said his country is aware of Egypt's stand on the NPT and is trying to understand it. He added: We will not mediate between Egypt and Israel.

Musa remarked that Germany enjoys the respect of the region's countries. He expressed pleasure at Germany's attempt to understand Egypt's stand and the Israeli stand as well because Germany plays an active role in the EU.

The German foreign minister expressed his hope that agreement will be reached on extending this treaty.

On the talks he held with 'Amr Musa, Kinkel said they dealt with the outcome of the EU delegation's visit to Moscow and the efforts to resolve the Bosnian crisis. He said the EU is trying to resolve this crisis.

Kinkel on Talks With Mubarak

NC2103110895 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0958 GMT 21 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 21 Mar (MENA)—President Muhammad Husni Mubarak received German Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel and his delegation in the 'Abidin Palace in Cairo this morning. Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa and the German ambassador in Cairo attended the meeting.

Afterward Kinkel expressed his thanks and appreciation to Egypt and President Mubarak for their warm hospitality.

He said he and the president discussed the latest developments in the Middle East and the role played by Egypt, particularly by President Mubarak, to advance the peace process.

He said President Mubarak's efforts helped strengthen the peace process and carry it forward to the point it has now reached.

The German foreign minister said he discussed with President Mubarak the situation in Iraq and the international sanctions on that country, the situation in Iran, and relations between Egypt and Germany.

He said he was happy to be in Cairo to attend the opening of Mubarak's Library in al-Jizah in cooperation with the German Brett Lsemel establishment [name as transliterated], which extended 9 million German marks for this purpose.

Kinkel said he explained Germany's position regarding the possibility of lifting the international sanctions against Iraq. He said his country still supports the American position, namely, that the sanctions should be maintained as long as Baghdad does not comply with all the relevant Security Council resolutions.

The German foreign minister said his talks with President Mubarak dealt with the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty. He said he again explained his country's viewpoint that Egypt should agree to the extension of the Treaty.

Asked about the German role in the Middle East peace process, Kinkel said that during the meeting, President Mubarak explained his view that the European Community should increase its commitment to and participation in the peace process.

He said Germany realizes the importance of the role the world can play in this regard. He noted that his country provided economic assistance to the Palestinian people in Gaza and Jericho.

He said Germany will continue to extend aid to the Palestinians. He pointed out that Germany twice offered 250 million ECU [European Currency Unit] to support the Palestinian Authority. It was agreed during today's meeting, he added, that the Palestinian people in the self-rule areas need to feel that things have improved since the signing of the peace agreement.

Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa commented: The German foreign minister conveyed to President Mubarak a message from Chancellor Helmut Kohl dealing with relations between Egypt and Germany. Kinkel also reviewed the German and European policy toward the Middle East peace process and the problem of Israel's nuclear program.

During the meeting, international issues, including the situations in Iraq and Bosnia, were also reviewed.

Libya

Tribal Conflicts Said To Cause 'Chaos'

MM2003143595 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 18 Mar 95 p 4

[Unattributed report: "Al-Ghadamsi: Libya Experiencing State of Chaos, Armed Conflicts Threaten Breakup and Collapse"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] London, AL-HAYAH—Well-informed Libyan sources have said that the Libyan Army has been able to control some of the violent actions which occurred recently in southern Libya between gunmen belonging to a number of tribes. But it has been unable to completely control conditions in al-Jufrah, which witnessed confrontations between al-Jama'at tribe and individuals from families of Hun city. The sources said that shooting was heard in that area Thursday night/Friday morning, despite the deployment of scores of [Army] units there.

Concerning the confrontations, which occurred in more than one location among the tribes, 'Izz-al-Din al-Ghadamsi, spokesman for the Coordination Committee of the Libyan National and Democratic Forces (headed by Major 'Abd-al-Mun'im al-Huni), has said that "the painful incidents in Libya are developing rapidly as a result of deteriorating living conditions and the regime's complete inability to take the necessary steps to prevent a famine, whose specter is threatening the homeland as a whole—which have forced some citizens to resort to weapons as the only remaining means to secure the daily bread for their children."

He added that "the indifferent position adopted by the regime vis-a-vis the terrible and increasing suffering which has affected all citizens will certainly bring about a serious state of security and social chaos, which is now clearly taking place in the form of bloody armed tribal and regional confrontations, hence threatening the homeland with breakup and collapse."

He went on: "While we fully believe that the regime is responsible for what is happening in our homeland, and while we also believe that it is necessary to warn of the potential disasters, we strongly urge all honorable people inside and outside the homeland to move quickly and seriously to confront the dangers of the disastrous policy pursued by the regime and to contain its destructive results. Without that, it will be impossible for us all to prevent the villages of our homeland and its peaceful cities from turning into arenas in which the sons of the one people fight one another over a loaf of bread." [passage omitted]

Sudan

Al-Bashir on Egypt, Eritrea, Regional Issues

MM2003142895 London AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI in Arabic 16 Mar 95 p 4

[Interview with President 'Umar al-Bashir by 'Abd-al-Bari 'Atwan in Copenhagen; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] ['Atwan] There was a great deal of clamor during your attendance at the Islamic summit conference about a meeting you were expected to have with Egyptian President Husni Mubarak, who said that certain anti-Egyptian statements you have uttered were the reason for canceling that meeting. What do you say to that?

[Al-Bashir] The meeting with President Mubarak was scheduled to take place prior to the press conference at which certain statements were attributed to me which I had not uttered. I have not attacked Egypt, and the proceedings of the press conference, anyway, are recorded and documented. At no occasion in the past did I ever say anything harmful to Egypt. All that had happened was that I related some facts pertaining to the Egyptian occupation of the Hala'ib Triangle. We affirm that the Triangle is Sudanese and we have documents to prove it.

We say to the brothers in Egypt that if they are really convinced that it is Egyptian territory, let them provide the proof of this through dialogue and negotiations. But they have refused to continue the dialogue.

['Atwan] There were reports of Libyan mediation between you and the Egyptian Government on this matter. How far has it gone?

[Al-Bashir] The Libyan mediation has never stopped since the start of the Hala'ib crisis, and the Libyan brothers have been constantly working to clear the Egyptian-Sudanese climate, because of their realization of the importance of relations between Libya and Egypt and between Libya and Sudan, particularly in the current conditions, and also out of their conviction that these three countries could form the heart of the Arab nation, and so if there was integration among them, it will have a positive impact on the entire Arab nation.

['Atwan] The mediation does not seem to have made any progress. Why is that?

[Al-Bashir] We feel that unfortunately this mediation did not achieve any progress. Agreement was reached on starting a dialogue between the foreign ministers of the two countries [Egypt and Sudan] to discuss the differences. We responded and a first round was held in Cairo with a second round scheduled to take place in Khartoum. But so far, we are still awaiting the arrival of the Egyptian foreign minister in Khartoum.

['Atwan] Some say that you have dismissed your moderate foreign minister Dr. Abu Salih and replaced him by an extremist foreign minister, namely Dr. 'Ali 'Uthman, and that this has led to the delay in the holding of the aforementioned meeting.

[Al-Bashir] We in the Salvation Revolution deal according to one set of principles. The minister does not talk a different language from the president. The changing of portfolios is a normal thing and there is not one single government in the world that remains as it is without changing its ministers. Dr. Husayn Abu Salih was very anxious to improve relations between Sudan and Egypt, and has exerted enormous efforts within this framework. But all his efforts were met with ingratitude by our brothers in Egypt.

I wish to say that whoever the Sudanese foreign minister might be, the position regarding Hala'ib is one of principle and so neither Abu Salih nor 'Ali 'Uthman could change anything in it.

All of us are anxious to preserve a good relationship with Egypt. This is because of our realization of the importance of this relationship, a fact which has been proven by all the past events. For when the Egyptian Air Force was hit in 1967 and Israel dominated the skies, all the remaining Egyptian aircraft were moved to Sudan and all the Egyptian naval units were also moved to the Sudanese ports. Entire Egyptian institutions, such as the Egyptian Military Academy, moved in their entirety to Sudan and the Sudanese skies and land were completely opened to the brothers from Egypt, and Sudan became Egypt's rear for a future confrontation.

['Atwan] There are some who fear that due to the stumbling of mediations and the escalation of tension, military confrontations could ensue. What do you say?

[Al-Bashir] I repeat and affirm once more that we are anxious to avoid any military confrontation with Egypt over the Hala'ib Triangle, because such a confrontation will only weaken the Arab nation and help the interests of the enemy, who as far as we are concerned is the Zionist enemy irrespective of whatever peace accords were concluded with him. For the Zionist enemy is an expansionist enemy, and we have not seen so far any indication of Israel's abandonment of its aggressive policy toward the Arab nation. Israel has been refusing to demarcate its borders and to sign the treaty on the nonproliferation of nuclear weapons. It still seeks to besiege Egypt in spite of the Camp David Accord. We have seen the leaked documents about the determination of the Israeli lobby to punish it because of its attitude toward the nonproliferation of nuclear weapons. We are confident that Israel will attack Egypt once it realizes that it has the advanced scientific, technological, and military capabilities to do so. Should this happen, we will stand by Egypt with all our capabilities.

['Atwan] Does this mean that international arbitration was not on the cards?

[Al-Bashir] We prefer to resolve the problem at a bilateral level. But should this fail to materialize then we would prefer to resolve it within the framework of Arab-Islamic mediation. Should this too fail, then regrettably we will be forced to resort to the international courts.

['Atwan] Some reports have been circulating about practical measures taken by the Egyptian Government to annex Hala'ib, such as preventing the Sudanese from entering it and appointing a representative for Hala'ib to the [Egyptian] Consultative Council. What do you say about this?

[Al-Bashir] We consider any change in the conditions of the [Hala'ib Triangle] region as an act of provocation aimed at drawing Sudan into a confrontation with Egypt, a matter which is not in the interest of either of the two countries. Whatever representatives they appoint for Hala'ib in the Consultative Council and whatever attempts they make to change the demagogic structure of Hala'ib, it will not change the facts and will have no value and will contravene international law. We possess documents to prove that Hala'ib was Sudanese.

['Atwan] Sudanese-Eritrean relations have suddenly changed from total alliance to absolute animosity. We have seen Asmara playing host to a Sudanese opposition conference. What has happened?

[Al-Bashir] This Eritrean attitude has come as a surprise to us. For we in the Sudan have been the only ones that supported the Eritrean cause for 30 years and still do. There are half a million Eritreans in Sudan who enjoy the same rights as Sudanese citizens. We were the ones that shouldered the burden of the Eritrean revolution when it received no support either from the East or from the West, so much so that it was called the orphan revolution.

We stood by the Popular Front before and after it assumed power in Asmara. I am not revealing any secrets if I say that it was Sudan which bore the entire cost of the plebiscite so that Eritrea could become an independent state. For all this, we were surprised by the anti-Sudan attitude taken by the Eritrean Government lately.

Generally speaking, when one looks at the current political map and the sources of financial support, one becomes less surprised. For animosity to Sudan has today become the door leading to the United States, Israel, and the Western countries and their financial support. It seems that the Eritrean leadership has artificially sparked off this animosity for this reason. For there are no problems between Sudan and Eritrea, and even if there were such problems, they could be easily resolved through personal contact, as the relations between the two countries are close in this regard, without recourse to the information media.

['Atwan] But the Eritreans have accused Sudan openly of supporting the fundamentalist movements opposed to the regime in Asmara.

[Al-Bashir] All the Eritrean movements from the far right to the far left including the Popular Front existed in Sudan and we opened the Sudanese territories to all of them. But after the assumption of power by the Popular Front, we closed the dossier of the Eritrean war and issued clear instructions to close all the offices, since Eritrea has become an independent state and consequently there is no reason for the existence of such offices in Sudan.

We will not become a party to any Eritrean conflict. Indeed, we have stopped all activities and closed the offices. During the plebiscite days, we took precautionary measures to ensure that those persons who are likely to make trouble, would not be able to do so. Until this very moment, we have not—and will not—permit any hostile activity to the Asmara government.

['Atwan] Then where did these accusations of support for the anti-Asmara fundamentalism come from?

[Al-Bashir] There are half a million Eritrean refugees in Sudan, as I have already said. So there might be some activities opposed to the Asmara government going on within them, exactly as there are anti-Sudanese Government activities inside Sudan itself. But the Sudanese authorities cannot keep a watch on half a million Eritreans scattered all over Sudan. There might be some secret Eritrean activities just as there are activities by clandestine Sudanese parties. Such a thing is likely. However, the Sudanese Government is not aware of such activities nor does it support them. We have asked the Eritrean brothers to supply us with any information they might have in this regard in accordance with the agreement concluded between us in such matters and then let them see whether we will deal with them or not.

['Atwan] How far has the Yemeni mediation succeeded in lifting tension?

[Al-Bashir] The mediation has not achieved its results. The Eritrean delegation which arrived in Khartoum was at a lower level than was expected and it was clear that the Asmara government did not welcome the mediation and does not want the dialogue.

['Atwan] Do you not believe that inviting the Sudanese opposition parties to meet in Asmara could constitute a threat to the [Sudanese] Government?

[Al-Bashir] Naturally. This meeting could fall within the framework of the escalation of the situation by the Asmara government. But the meeting will have no real value. For the Sudanese opposition parties meet in Cairo and elsewhere outside Sudan and they do not lack a venue for their meetings, as such venues exist in Cairo. They also meet in Kampala.

['Atwan] Do you fear that Eritrea might become a base for military action against the Sudan?

[Al-Bashir] We do not believe so, because it is against the nature of things.

['Atwan] What, in your opinion, is the United States planning for the Horn of Africa?

[Al-Bashir] The Americans want a Horn of Africa that meets their vision and plans. Hence the American landing in Somalia which aimed at the establishment there of a government that is under American hegemony. So when the Americans realized that this was a difficult objective to achieve, they withdrew their forces, followed by those of the United Nations, from Somalia. What has become of Operation "Restore Hope" and where is the hope and what has changed in Somalia? Where is the security, the stability, and the struggle against starvation?

It was noticed that as soon as the American forces landed in Somalia, the famine disappeared and we no longer saw pictures of the hungry and the starving. The same thing happened following the withdrawal of the American forces, despite the fact that the famine remained and no change whatsoever has taken place.

Paradoxically, the Americans are now talking about a plan for food security in the Horn of Africa and have been sending delegations to all three capitals of the region with the exception of the Sudanese capital. How will this objective be achieved without coordination with the only country capable of feeding the Horn of Africa and indeed the whole of Africa if it were developed?

I wish to ask: How will this food security in the Horn of Africa be achieved through the development of airports and ports and not through the production of food? The development of airports and ports means keeping the region dependent on foreign food relief, and consequently tying it to the bandwagon of American hegemony. He who wants to achieve food security must first draw up a strategy for land reclamation and provide modern technical and technological know-how. The development of airports means "relief security" and not "food security."

['Atwan] You accused the United States recently of supporting the rebel forces. Do you have any proof of this?

[Al-Bashir] Our proof lies in the statements of the Americans and their anxiousness to support the rebel movement as well as their advance knowledge of the recent attack on Kapoeta. For they withdrew their organizations to open the way before the Garang forces. We possess information about American military aid which the Garang forces have received via Uganda.

['Atwan] A British magazine that specializes in African matters has also spoken of Israeli and Arab support [for Garang's forces]. Which Arab countries are these?

[Al-Bashir] We are aware of all the support that arrives. We have been fighting the rebel movement for the past 12 years and have succeeded in penetrating it. A few weeks ago, a number of its leaders joined us. For this reason, we know all the Arab countries and quarters that support those rebels. We have seized munitions and weapons they had sent to Garang. We will announce all the details at the right time.

['Atwan] Other Arab leaders are attending the current UN Summit Conference in Denmark. Were any reconciliation meetings held on the margin of the meetings?

[Al-Bashir] Yes. I met with Algerian President Liamine Zeroual and we talked frankly and at length about the accusations that Sudan was supporting the Islamic groups in Algeria. It transpired as a result of this meeting that the information the Algerian brothers have in this regard is no more than what is carried by the information media and that they possess no evidence proving Sudan's bolstering or having relations with the Islamic groups operating in Algeria.

As Arabs and as Muslims, we feel sad for what is taking place in Algeria and to see Algeria, the only Arab country that possesses the enormous resources that could turn it into a bastion for the [Arab] nation, in such a state of division and devastation. We are confident that the Algerians, who have helped to resolve many Arab and Islamic problems, will find a way out of this situation and resolve their problems.

['Atwan] Did President Zeroual ask you to mediate during your meeting?

[Al-Bashir] No. He did not ask for our mediation. We on our part did not offer our mediation either, because we are aware of the sensitivity of the Algerian brothers in this matter and are aware of the accusations that had been actually the result of a sinister intelligence action aimed at embroiling Sudan's name in what is happening in Algeria. We have tried to keep ourselves totally away from what is taking place in Algeria. But if we were asked to exert an effort to resolve the question, then we would be fully prepared to do so. But if we are not asked, then we will not interfere.

['Atwan] Was President Zeroual convinced by your explanation?

[Al-Bashir] I believe he was convinced... We have agreed to keep in touch in the future.... When they talked about the statements of Dr. Hasan al-Turabi concerning the mediation, we told them: You have a charge d'affaires in Khartoum and he can get in touch with al-Turabi and inquire of him about all that is attributed to him. I hope they will appoint an Algerian ambassador to Khartoum, because this would facilitate contacts with the authorities in Sudan to verify any information they might have.

['Atwan] The Amir of Kuwait also attended the conference. Did you have any contacts with him?

[Al-Bashir] No, we have had no contact.... But we have had contact with the Syrian foreign minister. We appreciate greatly the Syrian attitude and steadfastness in the present conditions. It is an attitude that deserves all praise. I pray to God to grant the Syrians patience so that they may show still greater and greater steadfastness.

['Atwan] There seems to be some sort of coolness in the relations between the Palestinians and Sudan. How true is this description?

[Al-Bashir] I have met with President 'Arafat in Casablanca and had talks with him. The relations between us is fraternal and we talk in complete frankness with each other and there are no barriers between us.

['Atwan] We have noticed that unlike other Arab leaders, you have not asked to perform the Minor Pilgrimage or the religious duty of the Major Pilgrimage. Do you have any intention to do so in the coming months?

[Al-Bashir] I have performed the Minor Pilgrimage three times already. I hope I will perform the religious duty of the Major Pilgrimage too.

['Atwan] Have you not had any contacts with Saudi officials?

[Al-Bashir] No contacts have taken place since the Gulf crisis. My visits to the Holy Places were made before that crisis. The current political situation between Sudan and the [Saudi] Kingdom calls for reservation with regard to the Minor Pilgrimage as well as the Major Pilgrimage.

['Atwan] Is that because of your relationship with Iraq?

[Al-Bashir] We support the Iraqi people and their steadfastness in the face of the unjust siege and oppression that are imposed on them. Strangely enough it is those who speak of human rights who are the ones that are making the Iraqi people starve and depriving them of food and medicine.

These are strange times fraught with lies and hypocrisy. The talk about human rights by the United States and its allies is only a kind of hypocrisy and the proof lies in what is happening now in Iraq.

['Atwan] Do you expect the state of siege on Iraq will be lifted shortly?

[Al-Bashir] There is a worldwide conviction that the continuation of the siege was illogical because the resolutions imposing the siege were [originally] adopted with the aim of securing Iraq's withdrawal from Kuwait. But later they were developed to cover the destruction of the Iraqi weapons and long-range missiles—and this has already taken place—as well as the constant monitoring which has also been applied. Iraq has complied with everything including the demarcation of the new borders with Kuwait. Thus there is no longer any justification for maintaining the siege, which we consider to be unethical and only aimed at humiliating the Iraqi people and bringing them to their knees, because the Iraqi people were not defeated in the war. This is because defeat is a psychological state. Defeat does not mean the destruction of installations and arms and the occupation of land.... Defeat happens only when this psychological state is accepted.... On this basis, Iraq has not been defeated and, God willing, the Iraqis will not and will remain steadfast so that the siege would be lifted, and it will be lifted as a result of this steadfastness and the international pressure.

['Atwan] There was some talk a year ago that you were planning to step down from authority. What exactly has happened?

[Al-Bashir] Personally, I have no wish to continue in authority. From the start I did not want to assume authority, had it not been for the decision taken by the brothers who carried out the operation of seizing power. I hope they will stop entrusting me with this assumption of power. I have shouldered authority for six years and it is not an easy thing under such conditions as are prevalent in Sudan.

Anyway, we are trying to build constitutional institutions—political, economic, and even security and military. By the time of the presidential elections, this process would be completed and I hope somebody else would have the opportunity to continue the march.

['Atwan] There were rumors in media circles about a reconciliation between you and al-Sadiq al-Mahdi and about a plan for his participation in power. How true are these rumors?

[Al-Bashir] We do not refuse dialogue and we will never shut the door of dialogue with any quarters, because dialogue forms part of the programs of the Salvation Revolution, which had been drawn up by respectable Sudanese leaderships. The leaderships, be they from the Ummah Party or the Unionist Party, have now joined the National Program. Indeed, 80 percent of the former Constituent Assembly of the Ummah Party have now joined the Salvation Front's program.

At present, we are discussing the program of the revolution, but the media has reported our discussions in a distorted manner and called them reconciliation. We do not engage in reconciliation with a party and we will not engage in reconciliation with a sect. We will continue to be against partisanship and sectarianism. If al- Mahdi or any other person becomes convinced by the program of the Salvation Revolution and wants to join, he will be most welcome. Those who become convinced by our program will find a place in our institutions. As to those who are not convinced by our program, we are prepared to talk to them so that they may be convinced. There will be no reconciliation with partisanship or sectarianism.

['Atwan] The opposition has been concentrating these days on the economic recession and the continued fall in the value of the Sudanese pound and the standard of living, while the media report an improvement in this respect. What would you say in reply to that?

[Al-Bashir] We do not deny that there is an economic crisis and the Sudanese pound has been falling. This is because moving from the system of directed economy to a system of market economy is bound to have a temporary effect. But we are proud to say that we have achieved a high rate of development amounting to 7.5 percent last year. These figures have been stated in the reports of the IMF and not only in our reports. This has taken place at a time when the rate of development of some big powers has dropped to less than 5 percent. Before the Salvation Revolution, foreign aid amounted to more than 70 percent of the government's budget, but now foreign aid represents less than 3 percent and even this low rate has not been provided.

I wish to reiterate that we are meeting the cost of the war in the south from our budget, and the victories we have achieved are due to our expenditure on the war. Had the situation remained as it was before the Salvation Revolution, the Garang forces would have reached not only Khartoum but also Hala'ib. Furthermore, we employ funds in the development operations and have been constructing roads and have raised the number of universities in Sudan from five to 26 universities. The number of students accepted by the universities used to be 5,000 per year. This figure has now risen to 32,000 students. We have just expanded basic education and succeeded in eliminating illiteracy completely in some provinces.

['Atwan] You are criticized abroad on the grounds that although you are a Salvation Revolution, you handed Carlos over to France. There are some who say that this act has not helped in negating the image of terrorism from Sudan. What would you say about that?

[Al-Bashir] This question was not aimed at beautifying the image of Sudan, because the accusation of terrorism against Sudan was baseless. We were convinced after having been contacted by the French and seeing their documentation of the charges against Carlos, that he was not as some Arab quarters try to depict him. For this reason, we asked him to leave Sudan for another country. So when he refused to do so, we handed him over. We have discovered through evidence presented that he had committed crimes. We have not found one single aspect of struggle in the dossiers of accusations leveled against him.... We did not find one single operation that he carried out against the Israelis.

['Atwan] Is it true that your plane had some trouble at Casablanca Airport during the Islamic Summit Conference, and if this is true, how do you explain your traveling in a plane that is likely to have trouble?

[Al-Bashir] The plane did not have any trouble. What actually happened was that a media campaign was launched with a view to harming Sudan. All the planes that landed at Casablanca Airport were towed. This is a normal thing in airports. Because the Sudanese plane was of a light type, it was pushed by hand due to the lack of towing vehicles because of the large number of planes at the airport and because this represented an easy solution. I traveled to the summit conference in a small plane, not because Sudan does not have the resources to have large planes, but because of our care for the interests of our people.

We have renovated the Sudanese Airlines fleet and equipped it with the most modern aircraft in the world, namely the Airbus. It would have been possible for me to travel in one of these huge planes, but I refused, because this would have meant the cancellation of some flights and consequently disruption for travelers. The delegation accompanying me was small and the Falcon aircraft I traveled in was sufficient to perform the task the larger plane would perform. The cost of the large plane is high. We are responsible before God for the good management of Sudan's resources. Every millim [farthing] should be spent in the right way.

GCC Foreign Ministers Hold Meeting in Riyadh

Bahrain Foreign Minister Gives Address

LD1903132295 Riyadh SPA in Arabic 1117 GMT 19 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Riyadh, 19 March SPA—The proceedings of the 54th session meeting of the foreign ministers of the Gulf Cooperation Council [GCC] began at the GCC Secretariat in Riyadh at noon today. The meeting is chaired by Bahraini Foreign Minister Shaykh Muhammad Bin-Mubarak Al Khalifah.

At the beginning of the opening session, Shaykh Muhammad Bin-Mubarak Al Khalifah gave a statement in which he said: Greetings to you all. In the name of God and with guidance, I open the first session of our 54th meeting that is taking place today in the aftermath of the latest summit meeting of their majesties and highnesses the GCC leaders at Manama last year. [passage omitted]

At the political level, Shaykh Muhammad Bin-Mubarak Al Khalifah said in his statement: We would like to reiterate the firm position of the GCC members on the need for Iraq to comply with the UN Security Council resolutions pertinent to state of Kuwait, and their support for the sisterly United Arab Emirates [UAE] in its dispute with the Islamic Republic of Iran over the three Islands, Greater Tunb, Lesser Tunb, and Musa Island, which belong the UAE.

Concerning a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East region, we would to reiterate our call on the need to make substantive progress in the Syrian-Israeli and the Lebanese-Israeli tracks, and the withdrawal of Israel from all occupied Arab territories, including holy Jerusalem.

He added: I would like to express here my happiness with our meeting with Mr. Warren Christopher in Jeddah on 12 March, and its positive outcome on our bilateral relations and other aspects of coordination and cooperation between the United States and the GCC members, as well as the progress of the Middle East process. [passage omitted]

Afterward, the session was held behind closed doors.

Release of U.S. Citizens in Iraq Urged

LD1903155195 Kuwait KUNA in Arabic 1503 GMT 19 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Riyadh, 19 Mar—Shaykh Muhammad Bin-Mubarak Al Khalifah, the Bahraini foreign minister and current chairman of the Gulf Cooperation Council's [GCC] Ministerial Council, has urged Iraq to hand over the two American citizens whom it has detained for days.

In reply to a journalists' question after the first meeting of the GCC foreign ministers ended, the Bahraini foreign minister said: The issue is clear; Iraq must return the two men who have entered its territory by mistake.

In a gesture to an Iraqi intimation on its intention not to release the two Americans it is detaining before the economic sanctions imposed on it are liftted, Shaykh Muhammad called for the issue not to be stepped up. [passage omitted]

The current chairman refused to answer a question on whether the ministers had discussed the border dispute between Qatar and Bahrain, he said: This is among the political issues on the council's agenda.

[Words indistinct] during this evening's meeting, which is expected to be the final meeting, and after which a final statement will be released on the current session's meetings.

On the most important political issues discussed by the ministers, the Bahraini minister said: They were about Iraq and the Middle East. However, he did not give details about the issues, pointing out that the final statement, which was expected to be released this evening, will contain the details.

Statement Issued at Final Session

LD2003160895 Riyadh Saudi Arabian Kingdom Radio Network in Arabic 1135 GMT 20 Mar 95

["Text" of GCC statement issued at final session of 54th ordinary meeting of the Ministerial Council at the Riyadh General Secretariat on 20 March]

[FBIS Translated Text] The ministerial council held its 54th ordinary meeting at the General Secretariat in Riyadh on 19 and 20 March 1995. The meeting was chaired by Shaykh Muhammad Bin-Mubarak Al Khalifah, foreign minister of the State of Bahrain and chairman of the current session of the Ministerial Council. It was attended by: Rashid Abdallah al-Nu'aymi, foreign minister of the United Arab Emirates; Prince Sa'ud al-Faysal, foreign minister of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia; Yusuf Bin al-Alawi Bin Abdallah, minister of state for foreign affairs of the Sultanate of Oman; Hamid Bin Jasim Bin Jabr Al Thani, foreign minister of the State of Qatar; Shaykh Sabah al-Ahmad Jabir al-Sabah, first deputy foreign minister and foreign minister of the State of Kuwait.

Starting from what the higher council stressed in its 15th session held in the state of Bahrain 19-21 December 1994 to renew the determination on pushing the blessed steps on the march of cooperation in the various fields and toward broader dimensions, and to hammer down all obstacles in their path, the Council appraised itself of the steps which were taken within the framework of implementing the decisions of the Higher Council, stressing its keen interest in putting those decisions into practice to achieve the aspired-for objectives.

The Ministerial Council welcomed the initiative of the state of Qatar expressed by the heir apparent of the state of Qatar at the meeting of the Qatari Council of ministers on the 15 February 1995 and the welcome expressed by the heir apparent of the state of Bahrain of this initiative to find a brotherly solution that will preserve the bonds of amity and links of brotherhood between them through the continued mediation of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the good offices extended by King Fahd bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, the custodian of the two holy mosques.

The Ministerial Council also welcomed the resolution of the GCC [Gulf Cooperation Council] Higher Council at its recent meeting in the state of Bahrain which urges to double the efforts during the coming period to resolve bilateral problems pending between the member states before holding the 16th session of the Higher Council in Muscat.

The Ministerial Council expressed its welcome at the understanding memorandum reached between the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Yemeni Republic in Mecca on the 27th of blessed Ramadan for its positive consequences on the brotherly relations existing between the two sisterly countries and the countries of the region and on consolidating security and stability.

On the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the Arab League, it pleases the Ministerial Council to express its aspiration that this occasion be the beginning of a new era in inter-Arab relations, where the Arab nation finds the Arab League strong through respect for sovereignty and independence of all member states and the serious adherence to the Arab League charter and the charter of the United Nations and other international conventions and the mobilization of the Arab nation's potentials for progress, stability, development, and prosperity.

The Council also discussed the question of Iraq's implementation of the Security Council resolution relating to its aggression against the state of Kuwait, taking note of the resolutions of the Higher Council at its 15th session held in the state of Bahrain, which emphasized that Iraq's full implementation of all relevant resolutions of the Security Council constitutes a fundamental element in proving its peaceful intentions toward the state of Kuwait and the neighboring states and a beginning to the consolidation of security and stability in the region.

In this context, the Council reaffirms its demand that Iraq complete its implementation of the international legality resolutions pertaining to its aggression and the clauses of Resolution 687, particularly those concerning the release of the prisoners and detainees, both Kuwaitis and nationals of other states. The demand is also that Iraq give back properties and refrain from committing any aggressive and provocative act, in compliance with Resolution No. 949.

The GCC Ministerial Council appreciates the positive positions of the UN Security Council member states, aimed at securing full implementation of the international legality resolutions, as a contribution on their part to entrenching firm foundations for regional and international security and stability. The Council reaffirms its full eagerness that Iraq maintain its unity, sovereignty, and territorial integrity, and it expresses sympathy toward the fraternal people of Iraq in its trials and sufferings, for which the Iraqi Government bears full responsibility as a result of its rejection of UN Security Council Resolutions 706 and 712, which deal with Iraq's needs in food and medicine.

The Ministerial Council examined the development of relations between the GCC member countries and the Islamic Republic of Iran and the issue of its occupation of the three islands: the Greater Tunb, the Lesser Tunb, and Abu Musa, which belong to the UAE. In this respect, the Council brings back to mind in particular the emphasis put by the Higher Council last summit on the position of the GCC member countries calling for preserving the security and stability of the region, and laying down natural neighborly relations based on mutual respect and noninterference in others' domestic affairs, and also for shunning the use of force, the threat to use force, and resolving differences by peaceful means.

The Council expressed its deep regrets that the Islamic Republic of Iraq did not respond to the repeated calls by the UAE to arrive at a solution to this problem by peaceful means. It expressed concern that the Iranian Government had taken measures aimed at entrenching its occupation of the three islands in contravention of international law, the Islamic Conference charter, good neighborliness principles, and respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the states of the region.

The Council reiterates its firm position supporting and backing the position of the UAE and affirming its sovereignty on its three islands: the Greater Tunb, the Lesser Tunb, and Abu Musa. The Council also reaffirms its absolute support for all the peaceful measures and means taken by the UAE to recover its sovereignty over its three islands, and it urges Iran to agree to the referral of the dispute to the International Court of Justice.

The Council discussed the latest developments of all the aspects of the peace process in the Middle East, and stressed that a just and comprehensive peace must be based on UN Security Council Resolutions 242, 338, 425, the Land for Peace principle, and on a full Israeli withdrawal from the Arab occupied territories, including holy Jerusalem, and the retrieval by the Palestinian people of its legitimate rights.

The council, while noting with satisfaction the lessening of tensions which has been achieved by the peace process since it was launched at the Madrid Conference in 1991, at the same time expresses its concern over Israel's delay in implementing the Palestinian-Israeli agreement and the fact that it is continuing to change the demographic and legal position of the holy city of Jerusalem.

The Council also expresses its anxiety over the failure to achieve progress on the Syrian-Israeli and Lebanese-Israeli tracks, and in this respect it renews its support for the just demand of the Syrian Arab Republic and the Republic of Lebanon and its great appreciation for their stances and serious efforts to make the peace process successful.

The Council hails the continuous efforts which the United States is exerting to remove the obstacles which are obstructing the peace process and to activate the peace process in the Middle East.

Proceeding from the deep-seated conviction that a just and comprehensive peace must be achieved for the equal and parallel security of all parties, and endeavoring to make the Middle East a region free from all weapons of mass destruction, the Ministerial Council calls on Israel to join the nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty and to place all its nuclear installations under the system of safeguards belonging to the International Atomic Energy Agency.

The Ministerial Council discussed the deteriorating security situation and the increasing human suffering in the Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina in the light of the Serbs' continued criminal aggression and their rejection of the peace plan. The Council condemns the Serbs for their aggressive acts, their challenge to Security Council resolutions, and their intransigence toward efforts to bring peace to Bosnia-Herzegovina, and again calls on the Security Council to take all measures to guarantee that the Serbs comply with the relevant resolutions, reinforce the international protection of the United Nations, provide effective protection in the safe areas, and extend them to cover all Bosnian territory, and enable the Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina to exercise its inalienable, legitimate right to self-defense in accordance with Article 51 of the UN Charter.

The Ministerial Council called for stopping the blood hemorrhage of the Chechen people and expressed its deep regret over the continued bloodletting. It called on the disputing parties to solve their problems by means of dialogue and negotiations.

The Ministerial Council also reviewed the situation in Somalia and Afghanistan and called on the disputing parties to enter a serious dialogue to solve their differences and realize national reconciliation, preserve the unity of their peoples and the territorial integrity of their countries.

The Council also discussed a number of ministerial committees' minutes in the fields of finance, economics, agriculture, petroleum, post, telephone and telegraph, which were held earlier, and approved them, stressing the importance that the finance ministers complete their discussion on the unification of tariffs vis-a-vis the outside world in line with the resolution of the Higher Council at its 15th session in Bahrain.

The Council also endorsed the decision of the financial and economic cooperation committee that certifying the certificates of origin and the accompanied bills as well as the certificates of the home produced food stuff usability by the embassies, delegations, and consulates in the Council member states were unnecessary, stressing to the competent authorities to apply that strictly.

In the field of post and communications, the Council agreed on adopting the memorandum of understanding on the special postal service and other resolutions concerning the charges on telephone calls and to represent the council's states in the board of directors of the company set up by INMARSAT Organization.

In the framework of economic relations between the GCC members states and the other states and international economic groups, the Council reviewed the results of the meeting held between the GCC member states and the Japanese Government last January. It expressed satisfaction over the results of this meeting, hoping that this would contribute to a rise in Japanese investments in the GCC states. The Council also reviewed the results of the 6th meeting of the joint cooperation committee between the GCC member states and the European Union in Brussels on 7 March 1995. While noting the amendments introduced by the European Union to the system of dealing privileges from the beginning of 1995 which will adversely affect the Gulf exports to the European market, a matter that does not concur with the commitments of the European side according to the cooperation treaty signed between the two sides, the Council invites the European Union to look into trade measures liable to ensure that GCC exports continue to benefit from trade privileges in entering the European market. The Council also looks forward optimistically to the joint ministerial meeting between the two groups due to be held next May. The Council hopes that this meeting will give momentum to economic cooperation between the two groups toward wider domains, a matter that would bolster trade and investment between the two groups.

The Council was informed of the results of the dialogue held between the GCC member states and the U.S. Government on 9 and 10 March 1995. The Council decided to call for the convening of a meeting of the GCC ministers of foreign affairs, finance, and oil in order to examine the economic relations between the GCC states and the other states and economic groups.

Ministers Conclude Proceedings

LD1903231195 Riyadh Saudi Arabian Kingdom Radio Network in Arabic 2230 GMT 19 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Their royal highnesses and excellencies the foreign affairs minister of the GCC [Gulf Cooperation Council] countries concluded last night the proceedings of the second working meeting of their 54th session, which started yesterday morning at the headquarters of general secretariat of the GCC countries in Riyadh.

Following the meeting, His Excellency Muhammad Bin-Mubarak Bin-Hamid Al Khalifah, foreign affairs minister of the State of Bahrain and chairman of the current session, issued a statement in which he welcomed the kind initiative of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, under the leadership of the Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz Al Sa'ud, custodian of the two holy mosques, to resolve the border dispute between the two states of Qatar and Bahrain.

His excellency also pointed out that the council has completed most of the items and points on the agenda, and only the issues of the environment and man were still before the council, and these would be studied today.

He pointed out that the issue of Iraq's implementation of the Security Council's resolutions was an issue on the agenda.

Turkish Troops Enter Country To 'Confront' PKK

Armor Units Pass Through Zakho

LD2003135295 London Iraqi Broadcasting Corporation Press Releases in English 1226 GMT 20 Mar 95

[Received via fax]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] An IBC correspondent in Zakho reports that the Turkish Army entered Iraqi territory, in the liberated north, on the evening of 19 March, 1955. Turkish armor passed through the town of Zakho on its way toward the northeast to confront Kurdistan Workers Party forces in the area. Another Turkish column entered the area of Kani Massi about 40 kms east of Zakho.

Three Turkish divisions with armor and heavy artillery have been massing at the border since late February.

Troops Arrest PKK 'Sympathizers'

LD2003135995 London Iraqi Broadcasting Corporation Press Release in English 1232 GMT 20 Mar 95

[Received via fax]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Further to our earlier release, our correpondent in Zakho reports that the Turkish forces that entered Iraqi territory are estimated to be in excess of 15,000 men, with tens of tanks and hundres of armored personnel carriers. The Turkish Army fanned out toward the Hezasa refugee center. Our correspondent adds that Turkish forces have been conducting extensive searches in the camp since 3:00 am. They arrested hundreds of men and women, accusing them of being Kurdistan Workers Party sympathizers.

The Turkish Army is bombarding the villages around Zakho.

PUK Radio Reports Turkish Operation

NC2003153695 (Clandestine) Voice of the People of Kurdistan in Arabic 1510 GMT 20 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Citing international relief workers in Zakho, which is at [Iraqi] Kurdistan's borders with Turkey, news agencies have reported that Turkish military vehicles, including tanks and armored personnel carriers, have crossed the borders into Kurdistan region and headed for Zakho.

According to international relief workers, the streets of Zakho are closed and the city's inhabitants are no longer able to go to work.

Reports received from southern Turkey earlier this month noted that the Turkish Government was massing large military troops near the borders with Kurdistan.

Iraqi Kurds Said To Condemn Incursion

NC2003120395 Paris AFP in English 1154 GMT 20 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Nicosia, March 20 (AFP)—Iraqi Kurds on Monday [20 March] condemned a Turkish army incursion into northern Iraq as a violation of their safe haven in the region and of the country's sovereignty.

"This unjustified incursion is taking place at the heart of the security zone established by the coalition force to protect Kurds from renewed Iraqi attacks," said the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP).

"It is a clear-cut violation of Iraq's territorial integrity," said the group in a statement sent to AFP in Nicosia, referring to the operation against Turkish Kurdish rebels on the eve of the Kurdish new year.

The KDP, which has controlled northern Iraq together with other Kurdish groups in defiance of Baghdad since the 1991 Gulf War, insisted that the incursion zone had no PKK bases and was "populated only by Iraqi Kurds."

A foreign ministry spokesman in Ankara announced earlier Monday that Turkey had launched a huge military operation in northern Iraq against camps set up by the separatist Kurdistan Workers Party, or PKK.

Up to 35,000 Turkish troops including elite commando units backed by planes and armoured vehicles were sent into northern Iraq where between 2,400 and 2,800 PKK separatists are camped, he added.

The operation will cover a 220-kilometre-long (135-mile-long) border zone and advance 40 kilometres (25 miles) into northern Iraq, he said. Turkish forces would withdraw once their "limited" mission was completed.

"Thousands of Turkish troops, supported by 80 tanks, 100 APCs (armoured personnel carriers) and around 280 vehicles crossed the border through the main road into Zakho," the KDP said.

It said the Turkish force took control of the border town and imposed a brief curfew. They then headed east and surrounded housing complexes which are home to several thousand Kurds.

"The troops searched houses and intimidated the inhabitants. In Hizawa, they separated men and detained them in an old Iraqi army fort," the Kurdish group said.

"We condemn the incursion and call upon the Turkish government to withdraw its troops as quickly as possible from the region. We call upon the UN and member countries of Operation Provide Comfort to intervene," the KDP said.

The US-led operation, which flies patrols from an air base in southeastern Turkey, was set up to protect the Kurds from Iraqi attack after their uprising in the aftermath of the 1991 war for Kuwait.

The Turkish military has carried out several air and land raids against PKK camps in the region that Ankara says are used for cross-border raids. There was no immediate reaction from Baghdad on the latest incursion.

KDP Calls For 'Immediate End' to Operation

NC2103140195 Paris AFP in English 1319 GMT 21 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] Salah al-Din, Iraq, March 21 (AFP)—Kurdish factions here called Tuesday [21 March] for an immediate end to a day-old Turkish military operation in northern Iraq warning it could harm civilians.

"We were not informed beforehand about this operation. Such an operation harms the civilian population," said Sami 'Abd-al-Rahman, a spokesman for the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP). [passage omitted]

'Abd-al-Rahman said: "We appealed to both sides not to bring their problems into our region. The KDP is very anxious about Turkey's intrusion and calls for it to stop immediately."

The KDP has insisted that the incursion zone has no PKK bases and is "populated only by Iraqi Kurds."

However neither the KDP nor its main rival the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan had any information about fighting or casualties, and the operation did not seem to have excited much interest in the region.

None of the Kurdish newspapers made great play of the event, an AFP correspondent reported.

And one shopkeeper in the main town of Irbil said: "People here have other problems. The parties (KDP and PUK) are busy attacking each other or Iraq." [passage omitted]

Kurdish Infighting Reportedly Resumes in North

KDP Captures Banjwin From PUK

MM2103120695 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 20 Mar 95 pp 1, 4

[Report by Zuhayr Qusaybati: "Kurdish Infighting Resumes; Talabani Admits Losing City"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] London—A spokesman for the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan [PUK] (led by Jalal Talabani) has confirmed the continuation of the confrontations with units belonging to the Army in northern Iraq. He also spoke about "victories." However, he pointed to the resumption of the infighting between the PUK and the forces of the Kurdistan Democratic Party [KDP] (led by Mas'ud Barzani). The spokesman admitted "the capture of Banjwin city," which is near the border with Iran, by KDP fighters. It used to be under PUK control.

The PUK spokesman in London told AL-HAYAH that "major victories were achieved in the confrontations with the Army on Saturday night, but—treacherously—KDP forces exploited our forces' preoccupation against (President) Saddam Husayn's forces and launched on the same night a major offensive on the Banjwin and Nalbariz [as transliterated] axes." He added: "Our forces—in cooperation with civilians—managed to repulse an attack on Nalbariz after seven hours of fighting, and the aggressors' forces managed to occupy Banjwin." [passage omitted]

PUK Radio Admits Banjwin Capture

NC2003165295 (Clandestine) Voice of the People of Kurdistan in Arabic 1522 GMT 20 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted] Taking advantage of the evacuation of town of Banjwin and other areas by the peshmergas of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan [PUK] and the peshmergas' preoccupation with acts of confronting and resisting the Saddamist occupation forces, Mas'ud Barzani today ordered his forces to attack across the border against our defensive positions in these areas. Their aim is to occupy these positions and force the PUK forces to withdraw from the battlefronts with the regime and engage again in disgraceful internecine fighting, which only the ruling dictatorial regime in Baghdad and all the enemies of our people and of our democratic experiment in Kurdistan will benefit by.

The new attacks launched by the Kurdistan Democratic Party [KDP] forces and their occupation of the town Banjwin on the direct orders of Mas'ud Barzani are in violation of the cease-fire and the pledges and promises Barzani made before foreign and friendly delegations and prominent figures within the Iraqi opposition and the Unified Iraqi National Congress. [passage omitted]

Banjwin Said Purged of PUK

JN2003210295 (Clandestine) Voice of Iraqi Kurdistan in Arabic 1720 GMT 20 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Following the previous news we reported to you on repelling an offensive launched by Jalal's men [men loyal to Jalal Talabani, head of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, PUK] against the positions of our heroic peshmergas in Banjwin sector [word indistinct] and after our heroes in Banjwin sector were able to chase Jalal's defeated forces, the heroes of the field command were able to record another heroic epic by purging Banjwin and the hills around it of the last traces of Jalal's men.

Hence, the heroes of Banjwin's sector are controlling the Banjwin city center and huge areas, villages, and hills around it.

Jalal's men left behind scores of corpses and more than 40 various kinds of weapons. Among those killed was Ahmad Bikayfi, who is one of the military officials of Force-66.

PUK Radio: KDP Forces Shell Rawandoz

NC2003160395 (Clandestine) Voice of the People of Kurdistan in Arabic 1510 GMT 20 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The artillery of the Barzani leadership [Kurdistan Democratic Party—KDP] once again shelled the valiant city of Rawandoz at 1200 today. The barbaric shelling, which lasted for one hour, wounded two citizens and severely damaged the property of defenseless civilians.

Opposition Forces Report Attacks on Army Units

Radio Claims 'Major Victories'

NC1703164495 (Clandestine) Voice of the People of Kurdistan in Arabic 1520 GMT 17 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Victories follow victories follow victories. Ladies and gentlemen. O Peshmergas in the trenches of defense and honor. The heroic Kurdish Peshmergas together with the heroes of the Iraqi opposition are determined to foil all the plots and vile plans schemed by the dictatorial regime to reoccupy Kurdistan; to strike with one steel hand at the hostile enemy forces massed on all the contact lines with the liberated areas of Kurdistan; and to make the pure Kurdish soil, which is soaked with the blood of thousands of martyrs and is lush with grass and flowers in these days that herald Nowruz [spring], turn into a hell burning the soles of the tyrant oppressors.

O freemen in every inch of our wounded Iraq. Your brother Peshmergas in Kurdistan, which has become the national Iraqi opposition's citadel and center and the partisans of the struggling Kurdish parties, are recording one heroic epic after another and teaching the 'Aflaqite enemy lessons in resistance and lightning attacks.

Following the major victories achieved by the Kurdish Peshmergas—the protectors of the homeland and the people and the men needed at difficult times to thwart the regime's schemes and strike at its massed hostile troops on all fronts and axes—and following the seizure of large quantities of heavy and light weapons and military equipment and the capture of hundreds of honorable soldiers who refused to resist their brothers and surrendered to the Peshmerga forces, the hawk heroes of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan [PUK], the Kurdistan Communist Party [KCP], and the Unified Iraqi National Congress [UINC] have dealt another blow to the dictatorial regime's forces and inflicted heavy losses on them.

On the night of 16-17 March, a heroic force comprising the PUK Peshmergas, the KCP and UINC heroes attacked the headquarters of the 1st Regiment of the 104th Brigade in the Jibarah area in the Kurdish governorate of Karkuk, which the racist 'Aflaqites tried to tame and distort its demographic structure. After inflicting heavy losses in life and equipment, our joint heroic forces succeeded in seizing complete control of three companies from the above mentioned brigade, killed a number of enemy soldiers, and captured others. They also captured quantities of weapons and military equipment as follows:

—Seizure of the 1st and 3rd companies and a support company from the 1st Regiment of the 104th Brigade.

—Seizure of more than 60 weapons of various types, including [word indistinct] launchers, RPGs', 6-mm and 82-mm mortars, and PKC and Kalashnikof machine guns.

—Seizure of one RPRC communications system.

—Destruction of two Dimitrov 14.5-mm machine guns.

—Death of a number of the enemy troops and the capture of 11 soldiers who refused to resist and surrendered to the Peshmerga and UINC forces.

Our losses were:

—The martyrdom of two heroic PUK Peshmergas who sacrificed their lives for Kurdistan and its glory.

—Five of our heroes were slightly injured, including four KCP Peshmergas.

Blessed are your hands, O protectors of Kurdistan. May your victories last, O heroes of the UINC. Forward because victory is yours and defeat and humiliation to the 'Aflaqite butchers. Glory and immortality to the noble martyrs. And soon will the unjust assailants know what vicissitudes their affairs will take. [Koranic verse].

Attack on 2d Division Forces Reported

LD2003222895 London IRAQI BROADCASTING CORPORATION PRESS RELEASE in English 2058 GMT 20 Mar 95

[Received by fax—item includes warning: "Please note: we caution that the information we are receiving is sporadic and fragmented due to the fact that the situation inside Iraq is constantly changing"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Salah al-Din, Iraq, 20 Mar—In the early hours of 19/3/95, forces loyal to the INC [Iraqi National Congress] confronted the forces of the Iraqi regime in the Bani Maqan [place name as received] and Qurrat Hanjir [place name as received] areas 25 kms south and south east of Karkuk.

They overwhelmed all regiments of the Second Brigade of the Second Division and the First Battalion of the Fourth Brigade. Some 180 officers and soldiers from these units, along with members of the first Commando Brigade of the 1st Corps and the 27th Tank Regiment of the 1st Corps joined the ranks of forces loyal to the INC.

It should be noted that the Iraqi regime's forces showed no desire to defend the dictatorial regime and many officers and soldiers joined the forces loyal to the INC as they advanced on their positions.

Forces loyal to the INC seized a large amount of weapons including two 58mm anti-aircraft guns; three 37mm anti-aircraft guns; thirty-five mortar guns of various sizes; six anti-tank guns; twelve heavy machine guns; hundreds of light rifles and tens of pieces of radio equipment of various kinds. The forces also destroyed four T-55 tanks.

The regime began an artillery attack on Chamchamal yesterday evening which is still continuing. Three children were killed. Civilians have left their homes. In addition, a mosque was hit by the artillery fire.

Meanwhile, armed helicopters from the regime were seen flying over the towns of Kifri and Klar.

Opposition National Congress To Step Up 'Confrontation'

MM2103102995 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 19 Mar 95 p 6

[Unattributed report: "Iraqi National Congress: Confrontation To Be Stepped Up To Topple Saddam"]

[FBIS Translated Text] London, AL-HAYAH—The Unified Iraqi National Congress [UINC], which is opposed to President Saddam Husayn's regime, has pledged to step up confrontation with the "dictatorship." It urged "the tyrant, who is the cause of all the tragedies and disasters, to leave our homeland to its people and to find for himself any refuge outside Iraq."

AL-HAYAH received a statement issued by the UINC Executive Council the day before yesterday, in which it urges "the parties and movements to defy the authorities of oppression in Iraqi Kurdistan, in north Iraq, south Iraq, and central Iraq, and in Baghdad." And to "reinforce their solidarity and endeavors in order to unite all national opposition forces, close their ranks, and coordinate their efforts and plans with a view to toppling the oppression."

The statement stressed that "the national forces allied under the UINC are embarking on courageous challenges against the dictatorial regime in Baghdad, especially on the contact lines in the liberated area in Iraqi Kurdistan and in other locations in southern Iraq."

The statement pointed out that these moves "are taking the form of confrontations and contacts with our Army's forces in these areas." The statement pointed to "the increasing support for national opposition forces from Syria and other Arab and fraternal states."

The statement went on: "The challenges and confrontations are the result of a pertinent position and courageous initiative from the Iraqi opposition forces allied under the UINC. That is, in coordination with Arab and Kurdish parties, the Islamic Movement, and pan-Arab, Turkmen, and Assyrian factions." The Executive Council urged "the brothers in Kurdish party leaderships to give predominance to the interests of Iraq and its people and to the security and peace option for the Kurdish people."

The statement called on "the sons of the Army and the people, all members of the ruling party, the Revolutionary Guard, and the special security forces to abandon the tyrant and his clique."

The Political Bureau of the Kurdistan Democratic Party, led by Mas'ud Barzani, criticized the unilateral decision to confront the Iraqi Army—a reference to the attacks which the congress and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan said they launched against Army positions.

The Political Bureau of the Islamic Movement in Kurdistan criticized "the decision by some opposition parties to make a move to topple the regime without consulting the other parties." A statement issued by the movement's Political Bureau on 12 March said: "The proper thing is to hold meetings among members of the presidential council, the Executive Council, and party and movement leaders in Kurdistan, and to make contacts with the south and the center, and to prepare a suitable atmosphere, in order to take a decisive political decision on the working method and to define the duties of all the revolution's factions."

Defector General Urges Soldiers To Join Opposition

NC2003184295 (Clandestine) Voice of the People of Kurdistan in Arabic 1600 GMT 20 Mar 95

["Appeal to the Iraqi Army by Staff Major General Wafiq al-Samarra'i"; date not given—read by announcer]

[FBIS Translated Text] To our armed forces: O free brothers in our valiant forces. In continuation of the recent operations, our heroic forces will penetrate and fan out in several sectors of operations. We urge you to join your brothers and to point your rifles at the throats of the enemies of God, the enemies of Iraq, the enemies of freedom—the traitorous sons of al-'Awja'. You must join the hundreds of the hero officers and soldiers who have joined the revolution in the past few weeks. "And in God should the faithful put their trust." [Koranic verse]

Police Foil 'Terrorist' Attack Near Beersheba

'Terrorist' Taken Prisoner

TA2103070095 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 0500 GMT 21 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Police thwarted a major terror bomb attack last night when they discovered a truck laden with explosives near Beersheba. The truck, with three Palestinians aboard, aroused the suspicions of two policemen on patrol. When the officers inspected the vehicle, they were attacked, one of their guns was stolen and two of the Arabs got away. The third was captured. A massive hunt has been on for the two who escaped. Alan Ben-'Ami reports:

[Begin Ben-'Ami recording] It was two policemen making a routine patrol through the Bedouin settlement of Tel Sheva' beside Beersheba in the northern Negev, who thwarted this latest terrorist operation. The terrorists had apparently succeeded in bringing the truck laden with explosives from the nearby Gaza Strip as far as Tel Sheva', according to one unconfirmed report, helped by a Bedouin from the settlement. For some reason, they had stopped the truck there and then climbed into the back, possibly to check or prepare the explosives they were hauling. It was shortly after 1830 and already dark. The policemen, however, spotted the parked truck, and when they saw it had license plates from the Gaza Strip rather than yellow Israeli plates, they went to check it out. The cab was empty and the policemen then went round to the back to look inside. As they did so, they were attacked by two of the men there. A police spokesman said the policemen were hit with an iron bar wielded by one of the men and then the two terrorists ran off after grabbing the pistol of the badly injured border policeman they had hit. He was badly hurt from blows he received to his head. The other man was more lightly injured and he radioed in for help and reinforcements arrived on the scene. Some of the policemen who came climbed on board the truck to take a closer look at what was in the back and discovered a third man hiding there. He was quickly taken prisoner and is said to be a resident of Gaza. The area was sealed off and door-to-door searches began in an effort to find the two men who had run off into the night, as police bomb experts arrived to check the truck. It turned out to be filled with empty cages for transporting chickens and with a large amount of regular explosive material and a number of gas balloons. The truck and its contents were destroyed in a controlled explosion by the sappers. [end recording]

And following the foiled attack, the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] issued an order preventing all vehicles from the Gaza Strip from entering Israel. Police Commissioner Asaf Hefetz said an investigation is underway as to how the truck laden with explosives was able to cross the border crossing from the autonomous area undetected. Hefetz said initial findings after questioning the captured terrorist found that the three had planned to park the car overnight in the area and carry out an attack today in Beersheba.

Second 'Terrorist' Captured

TA2103095395 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0800 GMT 21 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The second terrorist who escaped from the police last night following the discovery of a truck laden with explosives was captured in Tel Sheva' this morning. There were apparently no additional accomplices in the attempt who remain at large.

Our correspondent Nisim Qeynan reports that Nisim Alon, one of the two policemen who foiled the attempted terrorist attack and was wounded in the head, was given medical treatment during the night and his condition has improved. Alon and his partner will receive a commendation from the police minister.

Residents of southern Israel breathed a sigh of relief after the second terrorist was captured. He had spent the night hiding in the mosque in Tel Sheva'.

Captured Gazans Identified

TA2103114895 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1100 GMT 21 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The two terrorists captured in the Tel Sheva' area are 22-year-old 'Isam Farahat Fathi Rabah and 44-year-old Riyadh Muhammad Ahmad Sabri. Both men come from Gaza's al-Shaja'iyah neighborhood. Our correspondent Nisim Qeynan reports that the results of the initial investigation indicate that one of the terrorists planned to blow himself up in a mass terrorist attack in downtown Beersheba.

Jerusalem Protesters Dispersed; Journalist Attacked

TA2103070295 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 0500 GMT 21 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] In Jerusalem last night, police dispersed hundreds of protesters demonstrating in front of the prime minister's residence. Police broke up the protest when some of the participants tried to block traffic. Fourteen people were detained. The demonstrations followed the funerals of the two Israelis killed in Sunday's [19 March] attack on an Egged Bus at the entrance to Hebron.

The funerals of Nahum Hoss and Yehuda Partosh took place at Hebron's ancient cemetery with thousands in attendance, including Chief Rabbi Me'ir Yisra'el Lau and 15 members of the Knesset.

During the funerals, YEDI'OT AHARONOT journalist Nahum Barne'a was attacked by dozens of angry youths. Barne'a says one of them saw him and yelled there is the garbage, sparking the attack. He said Qiryat Arba' residents rescued him and took him to someone's house. Barne'a complained that despite a massive police presence, his request that action be taken against the attackers went unheeded.

The Likud sharply condemned the attack on Barne'a. In a statement, the opposition party said the political dispute in the country must be conducted with words, not fists.

Netanyahu: 'Arafat, Hamas Seeking Agreement on 'Terror'

TA2003192795 Jerusalem Israel Television Channel 1 Network in Hebrew 1800 GMT 20 Mar 95

[Interview with Likud Chairman Binyamin Netanyahu by Menashe Raz in the studio on 20 March—recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Netanyahu] Under a wave of terrorist attacks, we will evacuate Judaea and Samaria and hand it over to a Palestinian state. If that is not enough, according to sound information in my possession, 'Arafat aspires to reach an understanding with Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] under which they will not murder Jews in Gaza and its environs so as not to endanger his rule. On the other hand, he is telling them: You can kill in Judaea and Samaria—that is okay. In other words, the murderers are receiving parallel signals from the government and from the PLO that to kill Jews in Judaea and Samaria is okay—it will achieve the aim of evacuating the land for a Palestinian state.

[Raz] You are presenting it as based on solid information. Can you tell us your source?

[Netanyahu] From unimpeachable sources. We know it, I think the defense establishment knows about it, and 'Arafat and Hamas knows about it.

[Raz] You know that the following question is also unavoidable because there is a feeling that if there are no attacks inside Israel, it is good for the government prior to the 1996 elections, which is contrary to your interests.

[Netanyahu] That is untrue. I do not want Jews to be murdered either before 1996 or after 1996. I also do not discount the possibility that the PLO and Hamas will reach an agreement not to murder Jews at all several months prior to the elections. Why? If the Israeli public thinks that if we just hand them—Hamas and that wonderful movement headed by 'Arafat, a righteous gentile—the land, there will be a lull in terrorism and they will cease terrorism and not attack us afterward, as they declare—I think that is unrealistic. The reality is that whether there is a lull or not, the joint aim of Hamas and the PLO is to bring about our destruction in stages.

IDF, PA Police Conduct Antiterrorism Exercise

TA2103140195 Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English 21 Mar 95 p 2

[Report by Alon Pinkas]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The IDF [Israel Defense Forces] and the Palestinian Police recently conducted a joint exercise in which a Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] takeover of the Rafah terminal was simulated, THE JERUSALEM POST has learned.

The exercise took place two weeks ago in an installation near Rafah. The simulated scenario was a takeover by Hamas or the Islamic Jihad of an installation operated jointly by Israel and the Palestinian Authority [PA], such as the Rafah terminal.

The exercise was planned by IDF officers and senior Palestinian Police officers. In the drill, IDF units practiced deployment near the installation, while Palestinian Police provided peripheral security as well as the evacuation of nearby residents.

A senior southern command source said that the exercise was very successful and that the IDF hopes similar drills would be conducted in the future.

Peres Opposed 'in Principle' to Separation Plan

TA2103101195 Tel Aviv 'AL HAMISHMAR in Hebrew 21 Mar 95 p 3

[Report by Pe'erli Shahar]

[FBIS Translated Text] Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres is opposed in principle to the plan to separate between Palestinians and Israelis and favors strengthening the level of economic cooperation between the two peoples. Peres supports the efforts to set up industrial parks, as agreed upon with the Palestinians, and does not understand how one can talk about cooperating in the industrial parks while at the same time formulating a separation plan. Peres believes that if the funds earmarked for the implementation of the separation plan were invested in economic development, such cooperation could produce positive results. Sources close to the foreign minister said that as a rule, Peres tries to come up with positive ideas for coexistence between Palestinians and Israelis and does not promote the concept of separation lines, which has a negative connotation.

[Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew at 0600 GMT on 21 March carries a live telephone interview with Foreign Minister Peres by Mikha Friedman and Gilat Mo'av. When asked whether the separation plan does not contravene the spirit of the Oslo and Cairo agreements, which promulgated economic cooperation between Palestinians and Israelis, Peres replies: "I understand that we are not talking about a physical or economic separation. We are talking about bolstering security measures along specific lines. One can call this all kinds of names, but we still have to wait and see the details. Whenever I consider the matter, I think we have to pad all the lines separating Israel and the Palestinians with opportunities for economic cooperation."

Later on in the same interview, when asked whether Police Minister Moshe Shahal's plan meets these conditions, Peres says: "I have not seen Moshe Shahal's final plan yet. I met with Shahal and he showed me the general outlines; however, I have still not seen a fully consolidated plan and will not rush to voice criticism before I see the plan in full."]

Sarid Favors Separation, Urges Evacuation of Hebron Jews

TA2103131495 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1200 GMT 21 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Minister Yosi Sarid said today that the Jewish population in Hebron will undoubtedly be evacuated, and that this should be done as soon as possible. Minister Sarid expressed his reservations with the commitment Deputy Defense Minister Mordekhay Gur undertook yesterday to defend the Hebron settlers. Sarid spoke to our correspondent Shula Schmerling during a tour of Binyamina and Sharon Park.

According to him, the government is committed to defend the 98 percent of its citizens who live inside the Green Line, and it will do so with the planned separation line. Protection for settlers in the territories will be allocated according to the commitments made in the Oslo and Cairo agreements but, Sarid stressed, these are two different types of defense.

Sarid added that last night's aborted terror attack in Beersheba proves that a separation line is essential. Had such a line existed, a truck full of explosive could not have gotten through.

Travel Agents Threaten To Stop Tours to Jordan

TA2003153695 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 20 Mar 95 p A5

[Report by tourism affairs correspondent Ilan Shehori]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Travel agents decided yesterday to stop listing people for trips to Jordan on 2 April if by then the Jordanians do not call off the policy of quotas and do not figure out how to handle Israeli tourists passing through the 'Arava and Shaykh Husayn crossings.

In an emergency meeting, travel agents dealing with Jordan last night met at Galil Tours offices to decide on such an extreme measure after some 1,000 Israelis were prevented from crossing through Shaykh Husayn last Thursday (Purim) even though they had entry visas. The Jordanians claimed there were more Israelis at the crossing than the daily quota allows.

Under the quota system decided on in agreements appended to the peace accord between the two countries, some 800 Israelis can cross through the Shaykh Husayn crossing daily. Prior to Purim, some 2,000 Israelis asked for permits to enter Jordan. All were approved, hotel rooms were booked, and Jordanian buses waited for them near the border, but after the first 800 Israelis crossed the border, the Jordanians announced its closure.

Dani Krost, director general of the Travel Agents' Association, last week blamed the Jordanians for the incident at the Shaykh Husayn crossing and the suffering caused to some 1,000 Israeli tourists. "There is a mess on the Jordanian side due to the lack of coordination between the various bodies involved in the granting of permits. There is no doubt that had everything been run by a central body in Israel, we would not have encountered such an embarrassing situation."

[Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew at 1300 GMT on 20 March quotes Tourism Minister 'Uzi Bar'am as "criticizing the decision by the Travel Agents' Association's to stop listing people for trips to Jordan. He said people should act with sensitivity and wisdom. He said the issue of tourism quotas will be discussed in the Israeli- Jordanian joint committee due to convene in Bet She'an on Thursday."]

Ministry Announces Training Program With Tunisia

TA2003170095 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 1600 GMT 20 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Israeli agricultural experts will go to Tunisia this summer as part of the government training program aimed at strengthening ties with Arab countries. This was announced by Foreign Ministry officials in Jerusalem today. A Foreign Ministry spokesman said that it will be the first time Israel has conducted a training program in Tunisia.

The announcement on aid to Tunisia was made at a ministry news conference on the creation of a new department that will coordinate Israel's humanitarian aid program. The program with Tunisia is a five-year, $10-million project that will be funded by Israel and Spain.

Amman Radio Cites Gore on Middle East Peace

JN1903150795 Amman Radio Jordan in English 1200 GMT 19 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] U.S. Vice President Al Gore is heading to Cairo today for a Middle Eastern tour. His trip to the region is aimed at discussing the peace process and relations between the U.S. and countries he is going to visit. The following report from Washington has more to say on the forthcoming tour:

[Begin recording] [Correspondent] Vice President Gore says he is looking forward to the trip that will take him to Egypt, Jordan, Oman, Saudi Arabia, and Israel. During his first stop in Cairo, Mr. Gore will join Egyptian President Husni Mubarak in establishing a joint commission on economic, science, and technical matters, similar to the panels the vice president has created with Russia and South Africa. But the overall purpose of Mr. Gore's trip will be to assess the status of the Middle East peace process. It comes as Israel and Syria have agreed to resume high-level talks here in Washington, following Secretary of State Christopher's visit to the region earlier this month. Mr. Gore admits the path to peace is difficult, but he remains optimistic:

[Gore] The road we have travelled has been arduous, and there remain obstacles, but a just, lasting, and comprehensive peace is clearly attainable.

[Correspondent] Mr. Gore is scheduled to hold talks with the leaders of all five countries he is visiting, as well as PLO leader Yasir 'Arafat. He returns to Washington Friday night. [end recording]

Letter Urges Gore To Oppose Russians in Chechnya

JN2103114895 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 21 Mar 95 p 6

[Report by JORDAN TIMES staff reporter Cathy King]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Amman—Availing itself on the occasion of U.S. Vice President Al Gore's arrival Tuesday in the Kingdom, the Jordanian Committee for the Support of the People of the Independent Caucasian Chechen Republic (JCSCP) has appealed to Mr. Gore and the United States to more actively oppose Russian military action in Chechnya.

In a letter addressed to Mr. Gore, the JCSCP urged the United States to "press for the end to the war and for a peaceful settlement of the crisis rather than indirectly financing Russian actions by continuing U.S. economic development aid to Russia."

The statement, obtained by the JORDAN TIMES, solicited the U.S. to impress that Moscow lifts restrictions and hindrances on the delivery of humanitarian aid to Chechnya. In addition it called for a U.S. boycott of the May summit to be held in Moscow, as long as Russia maintains its "disproportionate and indiscriminate assault on Chechnya."

Mr. Gore's visit to the Middle East began Sunday in Egypt where he discussed a joint Egyptian-American programme to encourage Egypt's private sector. Mr. Gore should be here for two days starting today, but the U.S. Embassy declined to reveal any further details of his visit.

The JCSCP has requested the U.S. Embassy to arrange meeting between representatives of the committee and the vice president to "discuss the humanitarian aspect of the crisis in Chechnya."

Russian military intervention in the breakaway Republic of Chechnya began on Dec. 11. Since then, and according to recent United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) estimates, 410,000 people have become refugees as a result of the conflict.

Russian forces took the capital Grozny in late February and have been launching attacks on Chechen strongholds south of it, including helicopter bombing sorties on the southern mountainous region where Chechen separatists have set up bases for guerrilla war.

Meanwhile, a statement issued earlier this month by the international Committee for the Red Cross (ICRC) in Geneva said that the Russian authorities were hindering the distribution of humanitarian relief in all parts of Chechnya.

In January, the first consignment of Jordanian aid was to be shipped by the ICRC to the Chechen Republic. According to an official at ICRC offices in Jordan, the shipment is still in Brussels.

"It is in the process of repackaging, but it will be sent to its final destination as soon as administrative procedures have been completed," the official told the JORDAN TIMES yesterday.

Donations collected by the JCSCP and other charities included medicine, medical equipment and baby milk.

The letter to Mr. Gore and signed by JCSCP chairman Sa'id Binu, also reasserted the right of the Chechen people as a "distinct ethnic nation" to self-determination, underlining their legitimate claim to human rights.

Paper Sees Gore Visit as Serving Israeli Interests

JN2103133195 Amman AL-DUSTUR in Arabic 21 Mar 95 p 22

["Spotlights" column by Tahir al-'Adwan: "Partnership and Activity for the Sake of Israel"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The region is witnessing U.S. political activity at the highest levels. After U.S. Secretary of State Christopher and U.S. Secretary of Defense Perry left the region, U.S. Vice President Al Gore arrived.

One cannot just write about the anniversary of the al-Karamah battle, Mother's Day, and the situation of the U.S. dollar and ignore the escalating U.S. political activity. Indeed, this is because the objectives of this activity should concern us much more than the issue of marking the anniversaries of eternal occasions such as the al-Karamah battle.

In the late 1970's and under the prevailing political and military situation of the Arab-Zionist conflict, a mere announcement by Washington about a visit by a ranking U.S. official to the region was enough to raise a wave of demonstrations and large-scale campaigns of denunciation from the [Atlantic] ocean to the [Arabian] Gulf. This is because the Arab citizen was convinced that Israel and the United States were partners in the aggression against his territories, rights, and resources.

Wars are over now and a new chapter—unfairly called the chapter of peace—is being opened. The Arab peoples' patience has run out and they no longer follow the tours and activities of U.S. officials in the region. However, deep in their conscience, the Arab peoples believe that U.S. activities serve Israeli interests. The fact is that such a belief reflects reality.

Christopher's recent tour was only aimed at calming the erupting situation at Israel's northern border with Lebanon. This serves Israeli interests. Moreover, the U.S. defense secretary's tour of the Gulf states was only aimed at securing the continuation of the blockade on Iraq. This too, serves Israel's interests.

Al Gore's current tour is aimed at achieving greater accomplishments for Israeli interests. The slogan he raised in Cairo, which calls for partnership for development, is a new slogan for an old one which seeks to lift the Arab economic boycott of Israel. Moreover, Al Gore wants to get Israel out of the predicament of signing the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty [NPT] by exerting pressure on Egypt and other Arab countries and pushing them toward signing the NPT regardless of the Israeli stand.

The product of the U.S. political activity is 100 percent Israeli and the loser will always be the desired just peace.

Deputy, Party Leader Denounce U.S. Moves on Jerusalem

JN2003145195 Amman AL-DUSTUR in Arabic 20 Mar 95 pp 24, 18

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Amman—PETRA—AL-DUSTUR—[passage omitted] House of Representatives Deputy Hamzah Mansur has said that various parties pose a threat to Jerusalem, chiefly the Jews in Palestine and the colonialist powers that have created the Zionist entity in Palestine. He said those powers, led by Britain and the United States, are working relentlessly to extend to this entity every aid to ensure its continued superiority and hegemony.

He continued: Regrettably, there are Arab countries that have become a third partner to the threat posed to Jerusalem. Perhaps in this context one can refer to what has been attributed to the Moroccan king, who has been cited as saying that the Arabs are not demanding authority over Jerusalem, but the holy places in it.

Deputy Mansur denounced all the hostile attitudes toward the holy city and the aspirations of the Arab and Muslim people. He said: We denounce the stand of the [U.S.] Senate members, whom we feel have been Judaized.

He said that the stands of these people should motivate every honorable Arab and Muslim to realize that the U.S. Administration—government and Senate—cannot but be on the side of Zionists against our nation, and that we should deal with them on this basis.

He stressed that this situation necessitates that the governments that signed treaties or agreements with the enemy, relying on the U.S. Administration's assurances, should reconsider their calculations and stands. Otherwise, they will be classified as enemies of Jerusalem.

Talal al-Ramahi, secretary general of the Popular Unity Party-the Unionists, said that what U.S. Senator D'Amato is doing is not only a violation of UN resolutions, but also a violation of the Palestinian-Israeli Declaration of Principles and the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty. He also described D'Amato's moves as a fatal blow to the peace process and one that could push it to ultimate failure.

He added: Jerusalem is a serious and sensitive issue. Any move by any party not approved by the Arabs and Muslims will result in cries for war and turmoil.

Al-Ramahi called for a unified Arab-Islamic stand to thwart the U.S. orientation toward moving the embassy to Jerusalem. He said that the U.S. Government and its legislative bodies have been siding with Israel since the loss of Palestine.

Paper Criticizes U.S. Senate Action

JN2003140095 Amman AL-DUSTUR in Arabic 20 Mar 95 pp 1, 18

[Editorial: "Jerusalem, The Title of Peace"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The new campaign led by some forces at the U.S. Senate to move the Embassy of the United States of America from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem is a blow to the peace process in the region, disregards all international legitimacy resolutions, and contradicts the principles of justice and a comprehensive and lasting peace sought by Arab parties and peace-loving forces.

This suspect campaign seeks to create a rift in the peace process, which has been witnessing setbacks as a result of Israel's stands that reject a lasting peace on various Arab fronts, especially self-rule agreements with the Palestinians, in addition to Israel's intransigence in rejecting withdrawal from the Golan and the Lebanese territories based on UN Security Council Resolution 425.

This move by U.S. Senator D'Amato, who collected the signatures of 93 members on a memorandum regarding Jerusalem, contradicts, in a basic and clear manner, the U.S. Government's active and prominent efforts to establish peace in the region, which if realized, could restore the region's security and stability.

The new U.S. move in the U.S. Senate comes at a time when U.S. Vice President Al Gore has begun a visit to the region to acquaint himself with the extent of progress achieved in the peace process in order to activate the U.S. role and remove all the obstacles facing it. He is the second senior U.S. official to visit the region in the past two weeks, and comes to assess stands between the Arabs and Israel and to push the peace process forward.

In any case, the U.S. Senate does not have the right to give holy Jerusalem to Israel and hence subject the region to the perils of chaos and instability and give anti-peace forces a chance to undermine peace.

Jerusalem, which is the center of attention of more than a billion Muslims must be maintained and liberated from the hands of the Zionists. This is because it is the land of Prophet Muhammad's ascension and which God blessed. Every spot in it is sacred and blessed and covered by Caliph 'Umar Bin-al-Khattab's covenant.

Despite this, the issue should prompt the Arab parties to stand in solidarity and cohesion with one another to launch intensive campaigns to foil the process of moving the U.S. Embassy to Jerusalem because this will harm the peace process and abort efforts to achieve its desired objectives.

Al-Kabariti Calls For Release of Journalist in Bosnia

JN1803164595 Amman PETRA-JNA in Arabic 1515 GMT 18 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Amman, 18 Mar (PETRA)—Foreign Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti today sent messages to UN Secretary General Dr. Butrus Ghali, Russian Foreign Minister Andrey Kozyrev, and French Foreign Minister Alain Juppe. All of the messages included a request to help secure the release of Jordanian journalist Nahrawand Shana'at, who was detained by the Serbian forces a month ago while she was in Bosnia-Herzegovina to cover developments there.

Serb Forces Release Journalist

JN2103102595 Amman AL-DUSTUR in Arabic 21 Mar 95 p 1

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Sarajevo—AL-DUSTUR has learned that the Serb forces released Jordanian journalist Nahrawand Shana'at, AL-DUSTUR's correspondent in Sarajevo. [passage omitted]

A few days ago, Foreign Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti sent letters to UN Secretary General Dr. Butrus Ghali, Russian Foreign Minister Andrey Kozyrev, and French Foreign Minister Alain Juppe, asking for help and mediation to obtain the release of Nahrawand Shana'at, the Jordanian journalist. Shana'at was detained a month ago by the Serb forces while covering events in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Foreign Minister: Iraq Honors 'Some' Commitments

JN1803085195 Amman AL-DUSTUR in Arabic 18 Mar 95 pp 1, 22

[Interview with Foreign Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti by unidentified AL-DUSTUR correspondent in Cairo; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] [AL-DUSTUR] How can the joint Arab action be translated into reality on the ground?

[Al-Kabariti] Joint Arab action starts with the dialogue, because an explosion is the only alternative to dialogue. We believe the forthcoming Arab League session may provide the forum for launching the dialogue which is needed to arrive at so-called Arab reconciliation, which we think is not reconciliation in the full sense of the word, but an attempt to rebuild confidence and restore the minimum level of Arab solidarity.

[AL-DUSTUR] The Arab League is now celebrating its golden jubilee. How can the Arab house be put in order? How can we close Arab ranks?

[Al-Kabariti] I think Arab conditions are unsatisfactory. I do not want to paint a rosy picture on the Arab League's golden anniversary. We believe that meeting may provide an opportunity if all parties indeed have good intentions of reviving the joint Arab action.

[AL-DUSTUR] The conditions of the Iraqi people are painful and regrettable, as confirmed by all reports arriving from Baghdad. Iraq has fulfilled what it is required to do in order to lift the sanctions. What is the way to lift these sanctions, or ease the Iraqi people's suffering?

[Al-Kabariti] We believe Iraq has taken very big steps to implement some of its international commitments and some of the international resolutions it is required to fulfill. In order to help lift the Iraqi people's suffering, we at this stage demand that the embargo imposed on Iraq must be lifted or eased to a degree that agrees with the measures which Iraq had implemented.

[AL-DUSTUR] Will the formation of an Arab regional security system, if possible, deter the Israeli nuclear capability or power?

[Al-Kabariti] In fact, security will be one of the most important points which the Arab League's forthcoming meeting will discuss. We hope that all conferees can agree on some concept on regional security. We in Jordan believe that we all must seek to have a Middle East free of all conventional and nonconventional weapons of mass destruction.

Businessmen Travel to Baghdad for Trade Talks

JN2003092695 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 20 Mar 95, p 3

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Amman—A Team of Jordanian businessmen headed for Baghdad on Saturday [18 March] for talks with Iraqi government officials and private sector representatives on increasing trade and economic cooperation between Jordan and Iraq.

It is the latest Jordanian delegation to visit Iraq amid intense moves on the international scene to lift or ease the 55-month-old international sanctions against Iraq.

The sanctions deprived Jordan of its one-time largest trading partner and, as the Kingdom adhered strictly to the crippling embargo on its eastern neighbour, international businesses made inroads into the lucrative Iraqi market, local businessmen say.

While most of the Western and Far Eastern businessmen visiting Iraq in the past six months have asserted that they were seeking post-sanctions business, local sources say that most of them were in search of immediate Iraqi orders for food and medicine which are exempt from the sanctions.

"Many of them offer long-term credit for supplying limited amounts of food and medicine in return for agreements for large-scale post-sanctions orders for other items," said a Jordanian trader.

Extending long-term credit is beyond the reach of many Jordanian businesses, and this was cited by the trader as a major disadvantage for Jordanian companies seeking to deal with Iraq.

"The commercial delegation which left today will seek to rectify this major problem," said the trader, who preferred anonymity.

The 41-member delegation is headed by Haydar Murad, head of the Jordanian Federation of Chambers of Commerce, several members of the board of directors of the federation and businessmen representing the chambers of commerce in the various governorates.

The visit of the delegation, mostly representing the trading sector in Jordan, comes in response to an invitation by Iraqi Minister of Trade Muhammad Mahdi Salih, who was here in February, and Iraqi Chamber of Commerce President Zuhayr 'Abd al-Ghafur Yunus.

It follows two trips made by Jordanian industrialists under the umbrella of the Amman Chamber of Industry.

The Amman Chamber of Industry has signed an agreement with its Iraqi counterpart under which Jordanian industrialists would help rebuild Iraqi industries destroyed in the 1990-91 war over Kuwait and convert some of the Iraqi military industries for civilian use.

The Jordan news Agency, PETRA, said the commercial delegation, in addition to holding talks with Iraqi officials and businessmen, would also seek to "familiarise themselves with the social situation and the economic and living conditions of the people of Iraq in view of the sanctions.

The delegation is accompanied by a 500-tonne consignment of food and medicine donated by Jordanian businessmen as "a reflection of the Jordanian commercial sector's brotherly sentiments towards the people of Iraq," PETRA quoted Mr. Murad as saying.

The delegation would visit Iraqi industries, hospitals and companies affiliated with the Ministry of Trade in Iraq, PETRA said.

The visit "aims at boosting economic cooperation and trade between the two countries and exchanging views on means to achieve that," Mr. Murad said.

The delegation's talks "will also cover cooperation in terms of establishing project and joint ventures within the framework of economic integration of Jordan and Iraq, he said. Envisaged projects will depend on technology and raw material available in the two countries and seek to meet the demands of the two markets as well as exports, he said, noting that Jordan gets preferential treatment for its products in a large segment of the international market.

Al-Kabariti Sends Message to Iran's Velayati

JN1803093995 Amman AL-RA'Y in Arabic 18 Mar 95 p 23

[FBIS Translated Text] Amman—AL-RA'Y—Iranian Foreign Minister Dr. 'Ali Akbar Velayati has recently received a message from Foreign Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti on bilateral relations and the situation in the region. Diplomatic sources told AL-RA'Y that the message reaffirms Jordan's firm and solid stand vis-a-vis Arab and Islamic issues, based on firm Jordanian principles, which stem from its commitment to pan-Arab security.

Al-Kabariti's message also reaffirms Jordan's firm adherence to true Islam, its principles, and tolerant doctrine. The message notes the importance of developing Jordanian-Iranian relations and promoting cooperation in the interests of both countries, peoples, and the entire Islamic nation.

Al-Watan Party Publishes New Weekly AL-NIDA'

JN1803174395 Amman PETRA-JNA in Arabic 1535 GMT 18 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Amman, 18 Mar (PETRA)—The newspaper AL- NIDA' has begun publishing. It is a weekly Arab political newspaper published by the al-Watan Party, which is led by 'Akif al-Fayiz.

In an article in the paper, 'Akif al-Fayiz said that the paper is not just the party's paper, but it will be a forum for expression and a medium of communication open to intellectuals to write on all issues of interest to the citizen and the homeland.

The newspaper's editor-in-chief is Bahjat al-Majali, who is also the party's secretary general.

Managing Editor Samirah 'Awad said that AL-NIDA' will be published every Wednesday morning.

Buwayz on Blockade, 'Resistance,' Israeli Proposal

NC1703182695 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1630 GMT 17 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The situation in the south was at the center of the second session of the Central Council of the International Confederation of Arab Trade Unions, now taking place in Beirut. Representatives of Arab delegations delivered solidarity speeches expressing Arab workers' support for Lebanon's workers and people in their confrontation and resistance of the Israeli enemy.

Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz, who attended the session, stressed that the Lebanese Government insists on full Israeli withdrawal to the internationally-recognized border. He said Israel is using south Lebanon to serve political Israeli, Arab, international, and even internal Lebanese objectives. He said Israel ignites the situation in the south as a disguise, or to change the true nature of the problem and claim a threat to its security. He added that Israel, through its blockade of the southern coast, is trying to force the Lebanese state to stop all its security measures concerning the searches of those who cross from the occupied region in the south.

Buwayz stressed that our people, with their modest capabilities, managed to confront the Israeli aggressions and turn the south into the least stable front for the Israeli enemy. This enemy, he said, is using the south to vent its internal political problems and to empty the visits, of American officials, of its content for solving the Arab-Israeli conflict, turning these visits into security arrangements removed from the essence of the issue.

Minister Buwayz said Israel, despite its statements that it has no ambitions in southern Lebanon, has so far used no expression to reassure Lebanon that it will withdraw. He asserted that Lebanon will not lose hope that Israel will reach a point where it will be forced to hold negotiations over its withdrawal from the south on Lebanon's conditions.

[In a related report, Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic at 1715 GMT on 17 March adds: "Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz has described Israel's proposal to dissolve the resistance and set a six-month trial period as impractical. He said the purpose of Israel's blockade of the southern coast may be to disturb the state and try to force the southerners to leave for Beirut to paralyze the Lebanese state."]

Buwayz Receives Phone Call From Syria's al-Shar'

NC1803065995 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 0530 GMT 18 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz has received a telephone call from his Syrian counterpart Faruq al-Shar' on the outcome of Christopher's mission. They agreed to hold another telephone conversation today to determine whether Minister al-Shar' will visit B'abda [presidential palace in Beirut] or if Minister Buwayz should visit Damascus.

It was reported that Minister Buwayz will visit Damascus after tomorrow, Monday.

Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri held talks with Syrian Vice President 'Abd-al-Halim Khaddam on the current developments and the outcome of Christopher's visit to Damascus over the last two days.

Israeli Naval Blockade Said 'Tightened'

NC2003124495 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1130 GMT 20 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Israeli warplanes overflew the Iqlim al-Tuffah villages, al-Nabatiyah, and the central sector at low altitude this morning, dropping thermal balloons.

The Israeli warplanes also staged intensive sorties over western al-Biqa' between 0900 and 0930 today. [passage omitted]

Israeli gunboats continued their action. They tightened their blockade of the coast between al-Bayyadah and Sahl al-Qulaylah in the south and 'Abbud and Abu al-Aswad in the north. An Israeli gunboat cruising off the Jisr al-Hamra'-al-Bayyadah coast fired on the fishermen's boats on the al-Qulaylah-Ra's al-'Ayn coast.

Al-Shar' Reportedly Says Peace Possible 'Within 3 Months'

TA2103113395 Tel Aviv MA'ARIV in Hebrew 21 Mar 95 p 13

[Report by Hemi Shalev]

[FBIS Translated Text] Syrian Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' believes that it is necessary and possible to achieve peace between Israel and Syria within three months, but he is concerned that Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin is "hesitating" and is intentionally slowing down the process.

Al-Shar' made these remarks in a meeting with a European colleague on the eve of the resumption of the Israeli-Syrian negotiations in Washington. A series of similar reports which arrived in the Foreign Ministry yesterday caused great interest in Jerusalem because of the message they give of a sense of urgency in Damascus to achieve an agreement.

Itamar Rabinovich, Israel's ambassador in the United States, will depart from Washington tomorrow evening to brief Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin about the results of his meeting yesterday and today with Syrian Ambassador al-Mu'allim. Rabinovich will also accompany Vice President Al Gore in Israel.

Lebanese Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz told the Cypriot foreign minister that President al-Asad is "extremely interested" in an agreement with Israel. Al-Asad wants to score progress and to reach understandings as soon as possible, according to Buwayz. Another report which has reached Jerusalem indicates that al-Asad will soon seek to hold another "Alexandria tripartite meeting" with Egypt and Saudi Arabia to coordinate the continuation of the political process.

Buwayz also said Lebanon expects positive progress in the negotiations, adding this will also influence Lebanon's position. Buwayz said that as soon as progress is made the Lebanese Government will agree to disarm Hizballah and turn it into what he termed a "political party."

Al-Shar', for his part, handed out grades to the Israeli leadership, noting that Syria "has no doubt" about Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres' commitment to peace, including to an agreement with Syria. In Syria's opinion, however, Rabin is "hesitating" in reaching decisions and is intentionally slowing down the negotiations.

Al-Shar' said the next three months will be "critical" for the process because of the approaching elections in Israel and the United States. He added that the new Congress, with a Republican majority, constitutes an obstacle to quick progress in the process.

Asked about the problem of terrorism, al-Shar' said "the entire region suffers from terrorism," and only a peace agreement will bring about a situation wherein terrorism will "decline."

Buwayz said al-Asad wants to reach a quick peace because of recent financial problems faced by Syria, including the problems caused by ongoing erosion of its weaponry. Buwayz noted that al- Asad also believes that peace will strength the Alawite regime. He said that al-Asad plans to hand down his rule to his son Bashir rather to any of the other aspirants.

Khaddam on Israeli Proposal To Cut Armed Forces

NC2003220195 Paris AFP in English 1934 GMT 20 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Nicosia, March 20 (AFP)—Syria has refused to cut its armed forces as Israel has proposed, Syrian Vice President 'Abd-al-Halim Khaddam said in an interview published on Monday [20 March].

"The reduction of the armed forces cannot be subject to discussions," Khaddam told the London-based MIDEAST MIRROR, according to a copy obtained in Cyprus.

"We refuse to put this issue on the negotiating table which comes under national sovereignty," Khaddam said.

Israel and Syria were to resume talks in Washington Monday after a three-month break, with a focus on security issues involved in an eventual Israeli withdrawal from the Golan Heights.

Israeli officials said talks on security arrangements would focus on limiting armed forces and a deployment of international observers on the Golan, which Israel captured from Syria in the 1967 Middle East war.

Khaddam said such a deployment had not yet been discussed.

But he added that Syria would prefer "observers linked to the UN Security Council, deployed on both sides of the border in an equitable and balanced way."

He said it was up to Israel whether the two countries would be able to sign a peace treaty before the U.S. and Israeli elections take place next year.

He said Israel has not yet clearly committed itself to withdrawing from "all occupied Syrian and Lebanese territory. In case of an agreement, it is normal the pullout takes place quickly, in a short period."

He said he believed the "United States was undertaking serious efforts for a peace accord. We are convinced that they favor a complete withdrawal beyond the lines of June 4," 1967.

In Damascus, President Hafiz al-Asad said peace must be "balanced, fair and comprehensive for it to last" during a meeting with visiting German politician Johannes Rau, officials said.

Israeli-Syrian negotiations have been deadlocked for more than three years. Syria has demanded a total withdrawal from the Golan while Israel has proposed a limited retreat for a three-year test period.

Washington Talks Said To Test Israel, U.S.

JN1703150295 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1235 GMT 17 Mar 95

[Station commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] Gentlemen: Israeli officials have made a string of statements expressing optimism over the possibility of achieving peace with Syria. Ahead of the U.S. secretary of state's tour of the region, these very same officials were pessimistic over the prospects of peace with Syria. This has promoted observers to raise the following question: Has the Israeli position undergone any changes warranting such optimism? As a matter of fact, there are no indisputable indications of a change. It is true that both the Israeli prime minister and his foreign minister have spoken of the need to pay the required price for peace with Syria. Yitzhaq Rabin has repeatedly said that whoever believes that it is possible to achieve peace with Syria without abandoning the occupied Golan is nursing delusions. Nonetheless, neither Rabin nor Peres has thus far publicly expressed an Israeli willingness to effect complete withdrawal from the Golan in exchange for peace. Hence, the upcoming U.S.-sponsored Washington talks, in which the United States will be involved, will put Israel to the test once again.

For Syria has not only demonstrated a favorable response to the U.S. peace initiative, but also made immense efforts to render it a success. Moreover, Syria has repeatedly set forth objective and balanced proposals to advance the peace process. The required progress could have been made if Israel not sought to split the ranks of the Arab negotiating teams, revoke the terms of reference agreed upon for the Madrid conference, and replace just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East with separate, distorted, and flawed deals. It has become clear to all that these deals have seriously prejudiced the peace process and called into question the very credibility of this process.

The picture of the regional state of affairs was quite bleak when the U.S. secretary of state began his recent tour of the region. For the peace process on the Syrian and Lebanese tracks of negotiations was stalemated. Worse still, the aggressive Israeli military escalation in southern Lebanon was at its worst. Moreover, the Palestinian arena was brewing with events and turmoil due to disenchantment with the Oslo accord and the growing Palestinian opposition to the accord and those who signed it.

The United States believed that it was impossible to salvage the entire Middle East peace process, which is extremely vulnerable, without undertaking serious action on the Syrian and Lebanese tracks of negotiations to achieve a real breakthrough. Once again, Syria has demonstrated a favorable response to the U.S. efforts. Nonetheless, Syria cannot but question the sincerity of Israel's purported good faith over peace. Hence, the upcoming Washington talks will put Israel to the test once again. Similarly, these talks will also test the U.S. role. A measure of seriousness and firmness is required to prevent the collapse of peace efforts. This means that Israel alone is required to meet the requirements of peace. This is because Syria has always been committed to the true components and requirements of peace, which are enshrined in UN Security Council Resolutions 242, 338, and 425.

These resolutions are unequivocally clear. They deem inadmissible the acquisition of others' territory by force, changing its features, or building settlements thereon. Moreover, they provide for complete Israeli withdrawal. Syria has repeatedly made it clear that it is not asking the United States for anything other than the implementation of the relevant international resolutions and the upholding of the substance of its initiative, which is grounded in the land-for-peace formula.

It is widely known that the United States, in the persons of former President George Bush and current President Bill Clinton, has committed itself to the achievement of a just and comprehensive peace in the region on the basis of the relevant international resolutions. Syria has proved to all its eagerness to achieve peace. It has made indisputable efforts to achieve this objective. Moreover, it has expressed its willingness to meet the requirements of peace. Israel alone has procrastinated and maneuvered, thus jeopardizing the peace efforts made over the past three and a half years. Therefore, it is now necessary to declare that peace in the region will not be achieved unless all influential members of the international community, led by the United States, put all their weight behind the efforts to implement this community's resolutions, uphold fairness, consecrate justice, and reverse the Israeli occupation of all of the Golan, southern Lebanon, and the remaining occupied Arab territories. Only thus can there be a true and viable peace. Such peace is bound to be just and comprehensive. Barring this, the Israeli intransigence, if left unchecked, will thwart all efforts to achieve the desired peace that could bring about security and stability in the region and the world at large.

Talks Seen as 'Last Chance'

JN2103110295 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0545 GMT 21 Mar 95

[Press review]

[FBIS Translated Text] TISHRIN editorializes on the Washington negotiations and the necessary elements for their success. By agreeing to resume negotiations, Syria has given a new chance to the peace process after the Rabin government blocked all ways leading to true peace. The Rabin government is still working toward this end.

The paper adds: If Israel tries to exploit the Washington negotiations for purposes of blackmail and maneuvering under the pretext of U.S. and Israeli elections, then it will destroy the last chance to achieve a just and comprehensive peace in the region. The issue of elections cannot be used to pressure Syria. This is because Damascus does not beg for peace at any price and can never be dragged into doing what it does not want to do, no matter what the circumstances.

The fact that the U.S. and Israeli elections are drawing near should motivate the U.S. Administration and the Rabin government to take serious steps to achieve true peace in the region. Since there is not much time left, Washington is asked to do all it can to play the role of an honest and impartial partner in the negotiations to save its initiative. At the same time, the Rabin government should offer something substantive to help achieve a comprehensive peace in the region and boost chances for building a just and honorable peace. The actions of the Rabin government, however, do not give much cause for optimism.

The paper asserts that the separate deals which Israel has reached recently have not achieved peace, security, stability or ended the conflict. In fact, those deals have created more elements of explosion, tension, and war in the region.

The paper concludes: A viable peace is that which guarantees Arab rights and dignity, creates a feeling of justice and equality, and ends the elements of tension—occupation, injustice, and aggression. This is Syria's unchanging view of peace.

In its editorial, AL-BA'TH says Israel has been seeking to marginalize peace efforts and undermine the foundations of the peace process. The paper blames Israel for the obstruction and stumbling of the negotiations. This has led to a long stalemate in the negotiations.

The paper adds: Israel rejects peace because it rejects withdrawal from the occupied Arab territories. It is interested in testing the endurance of others through pressures and threats. Some people gave in quickly so they gave Israel more than what it sought to achieve. No doubt, those people will regret this in the future because those who made them promises have let them down. In addition, those people who gave in quickly have been abandoned by those whom they thought of as their supporters.

The paper says Syria is a completely different case. Haste at the expense of land and rights is rejected. Peace that cannot continue and last is also rejected.

Israel Urged To Abide by Bases of Peace Process

JN2003174995 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1238 GMT 20 Mar 95

[Station commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] The whole world, particularly the United States, now realizes that Syria has saved the peace process from collapse time after time as Israel tried to torpedo it from within. Israel tried this after it failed to avoid joining the peace process and was forced through the Madrid conference gate in order to avoid a confrontation with world public opinion, which works for peace.

Syria has agreed to go back to the negotiating table because it believes that the negotiations themselves do not constitute an end, but a means that should take the region to the aspired objective; namely, peace. Naturally, this peace cannot be achieved if the concerned parties do not abide by its bases, terms of reference, and frameworks, which were approved by the international community through Resolutions 242, 338, and 425. All sides now know that these resolutions clearly call for full Israeli withdrawal from the territories occupied during the June 1967 aggression and March 1978 aggression against Lebanon. One of the paragraphs of these resolutions stresses the inadmissibility of the acquisition of others' land by force. These resolutions provided the basis for the convocation of the Madrid conference, which the parties agreed to hold, in addition to a principle formulated by the administration of former U.S. President George Bush; namely, the land-for-peace principle.

Had things proceeded normally since the convocation of the Madrid conference, peace would have been achieved in the region a long time ago. However, the peace wagon did not proceed on the right track for reasons known to all sides. Israel evaded the terms of reference of the Madrid conference and all the bases of the peace process, resorting to twisted methods and zigzagging ways. Thus, it wreaked havoc with the bases of the peace process, refused to abide by the UN resolutions, and tailored partial peace agreements that fit its own ambitions. Time has shown that these agreements have nothing to do with peace, and that the elements of tension and explosion these agreements include are greater than the elements of stability and security.

If Israel is now happy with going back to the negotiating table, and expresses its satisfaction with this step through its senior officials' statements, then satisfaction will prevail throughout the region when these negotiations produce positive results that bring our region closer to the aspired peace—peace that ends the state of war and puts this region at the threshold of a new stage. It is natural to say that making such progress and achieving such positive results needs, before anything else, a clear and frank Israeli stand that expresses readiness to withdraw from the occupied Arab territories to the pre-4 June 1967 lines and puts an end to the Israeli indifference toward the resolutions of international legitimacy and the will of the international community. It is natural to say that a just and comprehensive peace brings security to all sides, maintains stability, and places the region on the threshold of a new stage that necessitates work for prosperity, progress, and development. If Israel responds to the peace requirements and to these bases, the road will then be paved for this objective that the peoples of the region and the whole world have waited for. However, if it continues its intransigent and declared stands, peace will not be achieved soon. In fact, no negotiations will then be useful, either now nor in the future, regardless of their level. The international community and the cosponsors of the peace process should exert further efforts to persuade Israel to abide by the bases of the peace process so that this historic opportunity, currently available to achieve the aspired peace, will not be lost.

Al-Asad, al-Shar' Receive Lebanon's Buwayz

JN2003143595 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1215 GMT 20 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] President Hafiz al-Asad received Lebanese Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz at 1215 today. Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' attended the meeting.

Faruq al-Shar' received Lebanese Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz earlier today. The talks centered on the latest developments in the peace process in light of U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher's tour of the region. The two sides also held consultations and coordinated on the topics listed on the agenda of the Arab League Council's meeting scheduled to be held in Cairo the day after tomorrow, Wednesday.

In a statement to journalists following the meeting, Buwayz said that his talks with Faruq al-Shar' dealt with the developments following U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher's tour of the region.

Buwayz added: The resumption of negotiations between Syria and Israel is useful. We should wait for the results of these talks.

Buwayz noted: Any progress on the Syrian-Israeli track reflects on the other tracks, including the Lebanese track. We will wait to see whether there are good Israeli intentions toward the Syrian track.

Buwayz clarified that Lebanon uses all international forums and makes diplomatic efforts with friendly countries in order to highlight the brutal Israeli aggressions against Lebanon, Israel's intentions to use pressures on southern Lebanon for internal purposes, and the future of efforts to achieve peace in the region. He said: Prior to every tour by the U.S. secretary of state, Israel escalates the situation in the south.

Faruq al-Shar' hosted a luncheon in honor of the Lebanese foreign minister. The luncheon was attended by the minister's assistants, a number of the directors of Foreign Ministry departments, and the director of the Lebanon Bureau.

Buwayz arrived in Damascus today on a working visit to Syria. He was received at the Syrian-Lebanese border post by Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' and a number of senior Foreign Ministry officials.

Damascus Radio Reports 'Operation' in Hebron

JN1903205495 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1915 GMT 19 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Occupied Palestine—Palestinian citizens today machine-gunned an Israeli bus near the city of Hebron. One settler was killed and six others were injured in the attack.

Reports said Israeli occupation troops cordoned off the area of the operation and imposed a curfew. The troops also conducted large-scale combing operations in the area.

Afghanistan

Transfer of Power Postponed for 15 Days

BK2003134595 Islamabad PTV Television Network in English 1300 GMT 20 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The transfer of power in Afghanistan that was due to take place tomorrow has been put off for another 15 days. Announcing the delay, UN Special Envoy Mahmoud Mestiri said they are not yet ready for transfer of power as the new mechanism in this regard has not been finalized yet. He told APP Rabbani is showing willingness to step down, but other mechanism is not ready. Afghan president's two-year term in office ran out on December 28 last, but he has so far refused to relinquish power, citing lack of consensus among various Afghan factions on the interim set-up. Mr. Mestiri said he would fly to Kabul next week to persuade warring Afghan groups to hold fire and back his efforts for restoring peace in their war-torn country.

Replying to a question about the new mechanism, Mr. Mestiri said it included two representatives from each of the 30 provinces to be named by local shuras [councils] plus 15 to 20 personalities nominated by the United Nations. It will take one to two weeks to complete this mechanism.

Reason Said Lack of 'Mechanism'

LD2003143695 Tehran IRNA in English 1408 GMT 20 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Islamabad, Mar. 20, IRNA—The transfer of power in war-ridden Afghanistan, that was due to take place tommorrow, has been put off for another fifteen days as United Nations special mission has yet to finalize the, "new mechanism", for power transfer.

"We are not yet ready for transfer of power in Afghanistan," said U.N. special envoy on Afghanistan Mahmoud Mestiri who had announced last month in Kabul that President Borhanoddin Rabbani had promised to end his self-extended term on March 21. "Rabbani has shown willingness to step down but our mechanism is not ready," he told IRNA.

Afghan president's two year extended term in office ran out on December 28 but he failed to relinquish power for, what he said, lack of consensus among various Afghan factions on the interim setup.

U.N. special envoy on Afghanistan arrived here on March 9 to pick up his uphill task of brokering peace in war-battered country.

He told IRNA that he would fly into Kabul, which he has visited many a times before, next week to persuade warring Afghan groups to hold fire and back his efforts for restoring peace in their war-torn country.

Mestiri made desperate efforts last month to effect the transfer of power from President Borhanoddin Rabbani to a U.N.-proposed 24-men interim council but had to put off his plan at eleventh hour until March 21. He said his "old mechanism," was still feasible but did not say how.

About the "new mechanism," Mestiri said it included two representatives from each of the thirty provinces, to be named by their local shura, plus 15 to 20 personalities nominated by united nations, "it will take one to two weeks to complete this mechanism," he added.

Amidst fierce fighting raging on between forces for and against Rabbani in and around Kabul, the former Tunisian foreign minister sounded optimistic for the success of his efforts as all Afghan groups were extending help to his peace mission.

Mestiri's efforts ran into troubles with the emergence of Afghan student militia, known as Taleban, who took one third of the country by storm from warring Afghan groups.

Taleban drove the Hezb-e Eslami [Islamic Party] forces led by Golboddin Hekmatyar, Rabbani's main opponent, last month out of their headquarters Chahar Asiab, some 25 kilometers south of Kabul but lost the strategic area to Rabbani forces on Saturday. "They are cooperating with us," Mestiri told of Taleban who shot into prominence last autumn by taking over western Kandahar Province from local commanders.

Government Captures Two Regions Held by Taleban

LD2003173395 Mashhad Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Dari 1430 GMT 20 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Afghan Government sources in Peshawar have announced that forces loyal to Mr. [Borhanoddin] Rabbani, president of Afghanistan, after capturing Chahar Asiab have taken control of Meydanshahr, the center of Wardak Province situated 45 km west of Kabul. According to Islamic Republic News Agency reports from Islamabad, the above sources say that Meydanshahr was captured after a heavy clash on 19 March, during which Afghan Government planes and tanks subjected Taleban group positions to heavy attack.

Afghan Government sources yesterday succeeded in taking Chahar Asiab region, situated 25 km south of Kabul, from the Taleban group after heavy fighting. This region was previously controlled by the forces of Hezb-e Eslami of [Golboddin] Hekmatyar. The victories of the past two days by the faction loyal to Mr. Rabbani around Kabul have been unprecedented in the past three years since the fall of the Zionist [as heard] regime. In the course of the clashes over the past two days between the rival groups in Afghanistan, at least 500 from the Taleban forces were killed or wounded.

Proceedings of High Session of Ministers

LD2003191895 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 20 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The high session of ministers was held today under the chairmanship the esteemed Engineer Ahmad Shah Ahmadzai, acting prime minister. The press office of the premiership reported to BAKHTAR INFORMATION AGENCY that at the beginning Esteemed Ahmadzai remarked on recent military developments in the country and advances of the Islamic army. The session then heard a report of the commission on the reopening of Kabul University, approved it, and instructed that related ministries and administrations not spare any cooperation in connection with its implementation. The budget commission will determine the amount of unused funds in the development section of the ministries and administrations budget and will utilize the funds as needed.

In connection with the restoration of electricity in Kabul and the reconstruction of the country, the high session of ministers resolved that a joint session of the ministers, Afghan ambassadors, and charge d'affairs will be held in the premiership building, so necessary measures will be taken to secure the aid and cooperation of friendly countries and international organizations to fund the envisaged projects.

Similarly, the session resolved that esteemed ministers of the sectorial ministries and one of their experienced officials, as well as ministers of planning and finance, will hold a meeting in the premiership building to set up a commission on the reconstruction of the country.

Similarly, to evacuate refugees from the schools, the city services commission and the ministries of education and refugees repatriation will provide facilities, under a regular program, for the return of the displaced people to their original areas and localities, and will help within the limits of capabilities the deserving people. [passage omitted]

Bangladesh

175,000 Rohingyas Reportedly Repatriated

BK1903163595 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in Bengali 1500 GMT 19 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] About 175,000 Rohingya refugees have so far returned to their homes in Burma. This was stated by the home minister, Abdul Matin Chowdhury, when the visiting director of the United Nations High Commissoner for Refugees [UNHCR], Dennis (MacNamara), called on him in Dhaka today. During the meeting, they held talks on the progress and problems relating to the repatriation of Rohingyas from Bangladesh. The home minister thanked the UNHCR for taking the responsibility of expediting the repatriation and resettlement of the refugees. Mr. (MacNamara) also called on Harun al Rashid, the minister for state for relief and rehabilitation.

India

Involvement in Iranian Poison Gas Plant Denied

BK2003093195 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0830 GMT 20 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The government has described as incorrect the report published in THE WASHINGTON TIMES that three Indian companies are involved in the setting up of a secret poison gas complex in Iran. The external affairs minister, Mr. Pranab Mukherjee, told the Lok Sabha today that the Indian companies are involved in a project for the construction of a pesticide plant in Iran. The project was allotted to the Indian company as a result of an open international tender in which companies from the world over participated, he added.

ISI Plot To Harm Religious Shrines Discovered

BK2003162595 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 20 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] In Jammu and Kashmir, security forces have detected a conspiracy hatched by the ISI [Inter Services Intelligence] of Pakistan to harm the major religious shrines in the Kashmir Valley to incite public sentiment. Wireless messages of the Pakistani intelligence outfit to militants have been intercepted. Official sources said that the present occupation of the Charisharief shrine is a part of the conspiracy.

Deal Finalized With Russia To Upgrade MiG-21

BK2003155595 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1430 GMT 20 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] India has finalized a deal with Russia for the upgradation of its fleet of MiG-21 fighter aircraft. This was disclosed by the minister of state for defense, Mr. Mallikarjun, in Abu Dhabi today. Addressing a press conference at the International Defense Exhibition, IDEX 95, Mr. Mallikarjun said that under the agreement, only two or three aircraft will be upgraded by the Russians. Mr. Mallikarjun said a defense delegation from the United Arab Emirates is likely to visit India soon to identify areas of cooperation between the two countries in the field of defense.

Parliament Passes Customs Tariff Amendment Bill

BK2003160595 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 20 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Lok Sabha today passed the Customs Tariff Amendement Bill 1995 aimed at amending the Customs Tariff Act 1975. Replying to a short discussion on the bill, the finance minister, Dr.

Manmohan Singh, stated that the bill will protect indigenous industries by providing antidumping and countervailing duties against foreign firms. He said there was against the interests of the country and the World Trade Organization charter. The minister said the country cannot afford to remain isolated in the present interdependent world.

Senior Congress-I Leader Tiwari Resigns

BK2003161895 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 20 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The senior Congress-I leader, Mr. N.D. Tiwari, has resigned from the Congress-I Working Committee and other offices of the party. Announcing this at a press conference in Lucknow this evening, he said he took the step in view of the statements issued in the name of party Disciplinary Action Committee, threatening action against him, if he participated in the Bhatinda rally.

3d Phase of Bihar Voting Begins Amid Tight Security

BK2103065795 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 21 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] In Bihar, polling began at 0700 this morning in the third phase of assembly elections. Over 1 crore voters in 64 constituencies of Patna and Monghyr divisions are eligible to exercise their franchise. Out of 17,170 polling booths, 8,000 have been declared sensitive and supersensitive. Our Patna correspondent Ashoke Sinha, after going round the state capital and its adjoining areas, reports that long queues have been formed at several booths.

Security arrangements are complete to prevent any poll irregularities. Special commandos and the Rapid Action Force have been deployed to instill confidence among the voters. About 535 companies of paramilitary forces in Patna and Monghyr divisions will be maintaining law and order. Shoot-at-sight orders are in force in both the divisions. Repolling is also taking place today in 76 polling booths in 22 constituencies. The final phase of assembly elections in the state is scheduled for the 25th of this month.

Editorial Considers Shiv Sena-BJP Victory

BK2103104995 Bombay SAKAL in Marathi 13 Mar 95 p 4

[Editorial: "Verdict Against the Congress"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Voters in Maharashtra have given their verdict against the Congress and have elected the Shiv Sena-BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] coalition. This severe blow to the Congress stronghold will not only change the political scenario in Maharashtra but will affect national politics as well. Congress was also defeated in an earlier election, but those defeats were handed down by parties formed by those who had defected from Congress itself. This time, however, a real opposition party has been elected by the voters. This is very important from the point of view of the opposition parties. The Shiv Sena chief played a major role in the success of the Shiv Sena-BJP alliance. The infighting in Congress, differences among their leaders, and the dissatisfaction of the voters also contributed to the alliance's success.

Even during difficult times, the Congress party had always had Maharashtra support. Infighting in the Congress Party, however, had been increasing. As a result, the chief minister could not function properly. Also, allegations had been leveled against Sharad Pawar for his alleged ties to smugglers, bad elements, and corruption. Opposition parties campaigned mainly on these issues. Leaders from the ruling party itself campaigned against him, sometimes openly, and sometimes discreetly. The Congress Party was never seen trying to solve the problems of the state, or for that matter, was not seen to be united against the opposition. On the contrary, dissidence was obvious. Instead of showing concern for the problems of the common man, the leaders were seen to be involved in power struggles, and this left an impression in the minds of voters. As a result the Congress Party had to pay the price for the dissatisfaction that had been brewing for quite some time. The verdict of the educated voters in cities like Bombay and Pune shows the extent of their reaction. At the same time, this reaction was also evident among the rural voters, something never seen before. The Shiv Sena-BJP alliance maintained their incumbent seats while securing additional ones in Konkan Marathwada and in most of Maharashtra. Western Maharashtra had traditionally supported Congress, but this time the Congress candidates lost and the rebels were elected. Even candidates such as Vilas Rao Deshmukh, Madhukar Rao Choudhary and Chhagan Bhujbal lost. Congress lost the big war in Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra has now followed suit. Gujarat has also been lost. The elections for the Lok Sabha [Lower House] are around the corner, and at this juncture, if this is the state of the Congress Party, the activities against Shri Narasimha Rao are likely to gain momentum. Opposition parties, as a result of these victories, will demand mid-term elections, and this is not unexpected. There were also rebels in the opposition parties, and some opposition leaders played an important role in controlling these possible opponents by remaining behind the scene. This rebel element, however, did not affect the Shiv Sena-BJP alliance much. Young voters were seen supporting Shiv Sena. Also, the implementation of a code of conduct and voter support for these measures contributed to the high voting percentage, which helped the Shiv Sena-BJP combination.

No party has an absolute majority in Maharashtra. In this situation, it is interesting to see whom the governor invites to form the government. Technically, Congress (I) is the single largest party, but Shiv Sena-BJP have more members of parliament than Congress (I). Most of the rebels are from Congress (I). It is a common practice now that once elected, the rebels return to their party to help form the government. Even if this happens, there will still be more Shiv Sena-BJP members of parliament, and no one will have a clear majority. This indicates that there will be some horse trading to attract candidates so that a majority can be formed. Naturally, smaller parties like the Peasants and Workers Party, Janata Dal, and the Samajwadi party will play an important role. Much will also depend on whether they support the government by joining the front, or support the government from the outside. This kind of majority or a minority government will not provide smooth and efficient administration, however. Therefore, for the first time, there is a question mark concerning the state's political stability. Voters have given their verdict in favor of a Shiv Sena-BJP alliance to form the government. It will therefore be the responsibility of this alliance to remain united and provide political stability by solving the problems faced by the state.

Iran

President Rafsanjani Delivers New Year Address

LD2103045495 Tehran IRNA in English 0246 GMT 21 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, March 21, IRNA—President Hojjat ol-Eslam Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani on Tuesday [21 March] morning offered his felicitations to the nation on the occasion of the advent of the Iranian New Year 1374.

In his New Year address broadcast on the Iranian radio and television early Tuesday morning he hoped for god's blessings and national success and prosperity this year.

He also mentionied with grief the passing away of Imam Khomeyni's son Hojjat ol-Eslam Ahmad Khomeyni which he described as an agonozing loss.

President Rafsanjani also paid tribute to the martyrs of the Islamic revolution on the occasion of the day, saying that the strong presence on the scene of the people on every occasion, such as on the one for deprature of Imam Khomeyni's son Hojjat ol-Eslam Ahmad Khomeyni, was proof of the ideological attachment of the Iranian people to the Islamic revolution. The following are the highlights of the president's New Year address: "Our people had three basic slogans for their revolution, that is 'Independence, freedom and the Islamic Republic'. Now 17 years elapsing since then you see that the people are marching fast for the attainment of the very same goals. Every year we see the aspirations of the revolution more alive than we did in the previous year. The atmosphere throughout the nation is proof of that. Liberty exists at its highest level. That is realistic liberties not liberties as might exist solely in slogans. To the extent that sometimes there are even complaints about the exisence of excess liberties. In response to those exceptions, however, we argue that in order to safeguard the kind of the liberties that were the aspirations of this revolution we should not fear such small excesses of liberties. We argue that the fruits of this great achievement must be well preserved, without heeding the temptations of sinister forces.

"Another great aspiration of this revolution was 'independence' and with the passing of each and every day we see great strides being made towards its fullfillmewnt. No one person denies the political independence of our nation. Administratively, the ruling element is the will of the people. And economically, substantial progress has been made during the past few years and especially during the First Five-Year National Development Plan. That progress is of such a degree and quality to make it unique throughout the entirety of our history.

"In the past, we witnessed highly threatening dependence on foreign countries, and on the enemies of Islam, in every respect. But thanks God as a result of the presence on the scene of our people and also as a result of the support offered by the people and due to the watchfulness, as was peculiar to Imam Khomeyni and which is the character of our present leder as well as the responsible feelings of our government administrators, that great task is now being successfully fullfilled."

"Every day our people witness the puttting an end to one aspect of our previous dependence on foreign countries. That kind of independence especially as we witness in the area of learning, culture as well as the development of our schools and colleges truly deserves praise.

"More than 1.1 million students are now enrolled in our colleges. Infrastructurally, many novel enterprises were successfully undertaken in the country during the First National Development Plan. Today, we look to and rely on our domestic markets for much of what we need. And we have surplus production, which we export and which we will further improve in the course of our Second National Development Plan. Our exports during the First National Development Plan became five times more than they were immediately before that plan.

"Our demand for foods is fast being fully supplied by home markets which is an unprecedented accomplishement in the history of Iran.

"The raw materials for energy as well as our need for expert manpower are supplied by our domestic markets. Big projects are fast being implemented. Even during the past few months you people witnessed the inauguration of such national projects as petrochemical complexes of Bandar Emam and Arak, as well as Bafq- Bandar Abbass railway, in addtion to a big cement production plant in Qa'en and thousands of other projects that were inaugurated earlier on this year. As days pass, more and more projects of the First National Development Plan become ready faster than their predecessors. Our people, seeing such things, do not fall prey to the propaganda bombardment of the world arrogance and especially of that of the United States and Israel.

"Presumably, when they (the enemies of Islamic Republic) see such independence-wise moves their anger and spite against us increases manifold, and they consequently engage in obnoxiously defamatory propganda with which to manipulate the people. But surprisingly enough, confronted with those propaganda, our people become more resolute.

"This reconstruction-oriented atmosphere with its special emphasis on the economically-deprived and war-stricken areas which is the worthiest element of the First National Development Plan has improved our condition with promises of even better future.

"The First Five-Year National Development Plan has thus come to its conclusion and the Second National Development Plan starts today. And we now have a Rls [rials] 96,000 billion national budget ratified by the majlis with zero deficit which is proof of the speed of the work having been done.

"The three branches of the government now act in perfect harmony, and our demand for weapons are met principally by our own domestic producers. We hope we will witness fast reconstruction work during the Second National Development Plan. And we hope there will be no sign of such small problems as may now exist in the every day life of the people.

"National reconstruction will have a faster tempo during the Second Development Plan because unlike the situation during the First National Development Plan at which we had to import (some portion of) the material needed for those projects with the second project those ingredients will be indigenous. We have sufficient energy generation now with no demand for additional energy. We now have the necessary telecommunication facilities as well as roads, ports, railroads and whatever is the natural requirement for national reconstruction.

"For our importations, thank god, today we have the necessary dollar resources, and despite the negative propagdana being made we will not have any problem in that respect this year or any other year.

"The national health program and other statutory national insurance coverages that have their place in our national budget this year will commence as of today, and I expect that a larger public will shortly be covered by national health acts with certain assurances in that respect. Hopefully, within a few days hence I will offer my dear nation a detailed report of the projects under way and of those already completed. "The regulating of the national market situation which started two years ago will continue with persistent follow-up monitoring, the result of which you will obviously observe this year.

"I pray to God for his helping us to march on the path of Islam and the holy Koran, and towards the lofty goals of our resting imam, and of the progressive expectations of our wise leader. I hope, as our people did in the past, so will they do in the future and thereby make our enemies think twice before wanting to destroy the valuable security such as we now have in this country.

"You see that Iran is the anchor of stability in the region, and by looking around us we can appreciate the security we have for reconstruction work and growth and elevation. I see all that as being the fruit of life under the holy protection of the (holy) Koran and of the presence on the scene of our people.

"May peace and the blessing of God be upon you."

Rafsanjani Sends Message to Iranians Abroad

LD2103043895 Tehran IRNA in English 0238 GMT 21 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, March 21, IRNA—Iran's President Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani in his New Year's message to Iranians residing abroad reiterated that the fact that there were Iranians residing abroad was not considered a negative phenomenon.

"We do not mind that you are residing abroad. But you ought to be familiar with what goes on in your country," he said in his message.

He said that in today's Iran the pace of reconstruction had gained a momentum and that no one could ever deny the achievements of the First Economic Development Plan.

"I am sure that if you Iranians residing abroad returned home and travelled (around the country), if you went to the remote corners of the country,...you would see what great transformation has occurred in Iran," he said in his message.

In the message the president stressed on the fact that Iran was now self-sufficient and that in every field, be it industrial, educational, or cultural, the Islamic Republic of Iran was a country that relied on its own resources thanks to the achivements of the Islamic revolution of 1979.

Rafsanjani hoped that in the second economic plan the country would become completely self-sufficient from an economic point of view.

The president also mentioned an impressive array of achievements in such fields as mining, higher education and reconstruction of the war-ravaged areas.

He advised the Iranians residing abroad to value their mother language, Persian. "Do not forget the Persian language. Do not allow your children to become stranger to this great language," he stated.

Turkish President Phones Rafsanjani on Iraq

LD2003183395 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1730 GMT 20 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] We informed you during the foreign news in the 1900 bulletin that the Turkish Army this morning entered parts of northern Iraq. The Central News Unit reports that Turkey's President Suleyman Demirel had a telephone conversation with President Hashemi-Rafsanjani this evening, and explained the aims behind the entry of Turkish military forces into northern Iraq.

During the telephone conversation, the Turkish president said that the aim of Turkey's incursion is to combat terrorism, to pursue border rebels, and to establish stability in the border areas. Mr. Demirel stressed Turkey's strong commitment toward maintaining Iraq's territorial integrity, and assured our country's president that Turkish forces will leave Iraqi territory as soon as they have neutralized the disturbances caused by rebel forces in the border areas.

For his part, President Hashemi-Rafsanjani expressed gratitude for Mr. Demirel's telephone call and his explanations, and said: We expect that no harm will be inflicted on the innocent people of Iraq in the course of Turkey's operations in the border areas. Our country's president also underscored the importance of preserving Iraq's territorial integrity, and expressed the hope that Turkish forces will leave Iraq as soon as they have dealt with the threats to their border region.

GCC Support of UAE Territorial Claims Rejected

LD2103115895 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 21 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] In the wake of a communique issued by the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council [GCC] foreign ministers in Riyadh, supporting a stance of the United Arab Emirates [UAE] on the Iranian islands [Abu Musa, and Greater and Lesser Tunbs], a spokesman for our country's Foreign Ministry reiterated that the three islands are the Islamic Republic of Iran's [IRI] for ever.

He said repeating baseless claims will not have any positive effect but will only increase misunderstanding and difficulties.

Expressing regret for the contradictions in the GCC foreign ministers' communique, he added: The Islamic Republic of Iran has taken the first practical step to eliminate misunderstanding by asking for bilateral talks. Unfortunately the UAE Government has so far not given a positive response to the IRI's good intention.

He asked the UAE Government and other countries of the region to remain vigilant about provocations by foreign powers which intend to create sedition and realize their sinister objectives in the sensitive region of the Persian Gulf by broadcasting false news and by promoting an atmosphere of threat and insecurity. He added: It is essential that the regional countries pay serious attention to the fact that making territorial claims has already imposed heavy losses on our sensitive region.

The Foreign Ministry spokesman once again announced Iran's readiness for direct talks with the UAE, and said that holding talks is the most effective way of removing the atmosphere of pessimism.

Rafsanjani Welcomes Kazakh Pipeline Proposal

LD1903202695 Tehran IRIB Television Second Program Network in Persian 1900 GMT 19 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The passing of an oil pipeline from Kazakhstan to the Mediterranean requires the support of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Mr. [Nursultan] Nazarbayev, president of Kazakhstan, in a message to Mr. [Akbar] Hashemi-Rafsanjani [Iranian president] said that the passing of an oil pipeline from Kazakhstan through Iranian soil and Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, and Turkey to the Mediterranean would have a positive influence upon the economic situation of each of those countries, as well as strengthening friendship among those countries.

Replying to this message, the president of our country expressed his agreement to this request and announced that the Islamic Republic of Iran is always ready for the expansion of economic relations with the Republic of Kazakhstan, especially in the field of oil cooperation.

Nateq-Nuri Comments on Budget for New Year

LD1903214895 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 2030 GMT 19 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] In the last open session of the Consultative Islamic Majles in the current year, certain articles of the general budget of the country for the year 1374 [beginning 21 March] that the Guardian Council found to be contrary to the Constitution or the shari'a principles and returned to the Majles were discussed and approved.

In the second part of the open session of the Majles on 19 March, which was convened at 2030 under the chairmanship of Majles Speaker Mr. ['Ali Akbar] Nateq-Nuri, the views of the Guardian Council approving the amendments approved by the Majles in the next year's general budget of the country were announced. Thus the general budget law for the year 1374 was forwarded to the government for implementation. [passage omitted]

At the end of this session the speaker of the Islamic Consultative Majles told our correspondent:

[Begin Nateq-Nuri recording] In the name of God, the compassionate, the merciful. At the beginning, I wish to thank you for reflecting the reports from Majles, especially in connection with the debates on the budget. You and your colleagues at the Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran have made good efforts.

Fortunately, our 1374 budget has a special characteristic did not exist in the 1373 budget. Namely, our 1374 budget has been drawn up on the basis of the logic of the

Second Economic, Social and Cultural Development Plan. Therefore, the structure of the 1374 budget is based on programs that we have seen and approved in the Second Plan. The main features of that structure were delineated by the esteemed leader and were taken into account by the government and, fortunately, the Majles also succeeded paying attention to them, and you are aware of that too. The budget was drawn up on the basis of the logic of the plan.

What we had in mind in approving this budget—and here I give you a brief account of it—was firstly to control the cash flow, because one of the problems that we have in this country that leads to inflation is the large volume of cash flow. If this is controlled, it will play a big part in controlling inflation. Therefore, in the plan we have paid attention to controlling cash flow, which can play a good role.

In connection with higher education, especially in the field of research, we —when I say we, I mean the Majles, my good colleagues—have paid attention to this matter and we have allocated a good sum for research and for higher education. Also in the field of education and training, the Majles has again paid a special attention to it. The problem of education and training is a big issue, but so far as it was possible and affordable the Majles has paid attention to it.

In connection with deprived areas, the Majles in all different sessions has paid special attention to it. The Fourth Majles has also paid a special attention to this sector. We have shown this in the plan and we have also included it in this budget and we hope that God will enable the government and the executive officials to implement this budget. [end recording]

Commentary Views Middle East Peace Process

NC2003104595 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0445 GMT 20 Mar 95

[Commentary by the News Research and Commentary Group]

[FBIS Translated Text] Although new life was injected into the Middle East peace process in 1373 [year ending 20 March 1995] with Jordan's joining it, the emergence of controversies on its major points led to basic problems. Because of Israel's expansionist policies, the engineers of this process were unable to draw Syria and Lebanon into the process on the one hand, and—on the other hand—the non-implementation of the major points in the Oslo Accord between the Zionist regime and 'Arafat defeated the process in its core, increasing the possibility that the process will be pushed back.

Analysts believe that the Zionist regime's expansionist and aggressive policies are the main reason for the failure of the process. By ignoring the UN Security Council resolutions and by putting forth new conditions, the Zionist regime is trying to achieve a compromise with Syria and Lebanon so as to derive the most benefit from it. And these demands are completely unacceptable to the Syrian and Lebanese statesmen since they violate the two countries' independence and territorial integrity.

The other point that played a part in the failure of the compromise process has been America's inconsistent stand. Due to the variety of stands in the regional policy of Washington, which is the most important, active foreign player in the compromise process, on the one hand America has to be impartial in the long-lasting Middle East crisis in order to play the role of mediator and, on the other hand, it has to emphasize its limitless military, political, and financial support for Tel Aviv and to ensure the Zionist regime's supremacy in the region because of pressures by influential Zionist elements in America.

The contrast in these two roles has created a situation in which America is unable to have a political impact on the political process. The upcoming elections in America and Israel which have created a special political situation because of party rivalries have been among the other elements that have helped in the failure of the Middle East compromise. Israel's Labor Party, which was defeated in the union elections last year for the first time since the establishment of the usurping regime, does not want to face a similar fate in the upcoming parliamentary elections. This is why it started some time ago to insist on its expansionist policies in a bid to gain the votes of the Zionist immigrants. In the Zionist society which has been formed on the basis of usurping land and violating the rights of others, expansionist and aggressive slogans are more popular; and the Labor Party does not want to lag behind its rivals in this field.

The same applies to the U.S. elections. In view of the influence that the Zionist lobbies have on the U.S. elections, the two rival U.S. parties—the Republicans and the Democrats—are cautious in putting forth their political views, especially on the Middle East, in this pre-election phase; and in this process the solution of crises and especially the deep-rooted Middle East crisis will be in a stalemate for some time. Of course, in the midst of all this, it is also possible that the White House Democrats will try to succeed in solving the Middle East crisis to the benefit of the Zionist regime in the last phase of their rule and to use this as an instrument to limit powers. However, it should not be forgotten that the Arab governments, especially Syria and Lebanon, will give in to this degradation.

Nepal

Prime Minister Outlines Government Priorities

MS2003143295 London THE TIMES in English 18 Mar 95 p 17

[Report by Tunku Varadarajan and Michael Binyon, incorporating remarks by Prime Minister Man Mohan Adhikari: "Nepal's Communist Leader Seeks Help From Britain"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Man Mohan Adhikari, the Nepalese Prime Minister has asked Britain for help in stabilising his country's fragile democracy.

Speaking in London on a private visit following the Copenhagen social summit, he called for assistance in the drafting of a Bill of Rights and in compensating those who had suffered human rights violations before the upheaval that led to the end of Nepal's absolute monarchy. He also wanted help in the introduction of voter identity cards and measures to ensure greater fairness and protection from intimidation in future elections.

Mr Adhikari, who as the country's first Communist Prime Minister has just completed 100 days in office, outlined the priorities of his Government. These include the encouragement of the private sector, land reform and the linking of Nepal's economy to the "global reality", without which, he said the economy would remain backward.

He added that it was impossible for the state to manage every aspect of the economy and called for investment from the developed world, particularly from Britain.

Explaining the apparent contradiction between his proclaimed communism and his faith in market forces, he said that Nepal's communists had to accommodate the country's conditions. When they had slavishly followed other foreign communists, they failed to win any support at home. "Sometimes people ask, 'How come a communist is talking this way?' I say: 'This is reality. We can't ignore it.'"

The Prime Minister, who spent some years in prison for his pro- democracy agitation, was careful to emphasise that King Birendra was an integral part of the country's democratic constitution, which he said was now modelled on Westminster.

Multiparty democracy and respect for the monarchy were basic tenets of the new constitution of Nepal, the worlds only Hindu kingdom.

Referring to the difficulties of his landlocked country in balancing relations with its two powerful neighbours, India and China, Mr Adhikari underlined his insistence on his country's full sovereignty. In the past this has often led to friction with India, especially over access to the sea and free overland transit to Calcutta's port.

Wryly admitting that "special relations" with Delhi were still delicate, he said that often the more intimate the relationship between neighbours was, the greater the chance of misunderstanding.

At present Nepal is locked in an argument with India over the construction of a huge dam, funded by the World Bank and Western donors, on the border between the two countries.

Mr Adhikari said relations with Britain were excellent and he praised British government help for retired Gurkha soldiers and schemes to help them buy land in their villages.

Clearly proud of the Gurkhas martial tradition, he said that his Government would be willing to contribute its soldiers to any United Nations peacekeeping operation if it was asked to do so.

Agreement Reached With India on Water Cooperation

BK1703135095 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 16 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] India and Nepal have agreed to reactivate the Joint Technical Committee to increase cooperation in water resources. The two countries held high-level official talks in Kathmandu and reviewed the progress in the implementation of ongoing projects. They also agreed to give a thrust to two projects—the Sapt Kosi High Dam and the 7,500 megawatt (Pancheswar) hydel [hydroelectric] project.

Our Kathmandu correspondent reports that about 70 percent work on the detailed project report for the (Pancheswar) project is already over and sharing of benefits is to be sorted out by the Joint Technical Committee.

Pakistan

Yusuf Associates Arrested; Kansi Said Among Suspects

Arrest Follows 'Tip' by Yusuf

BK2103121895 Karachi DAWN in English 21 Mar 95 p 1

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Islamabad, March 20: Two Pakistani citizens suspected to be the colleagues of Ramzi Ahmad Yusuf who was extradited to the United States for his alleged involvement in New York Trade Centre bomb blast were arrested in Quetta and brought to Islamabad, a government official said on Monday [20 March].

The two suspects were brought in a C-130 military plane which landed in Islamabad around 7 pm, the official said.

He said a US official and some Pakistani intelligence people accompanied the accused who were whisked away to some unknown place immediately. "Both of them were bearded," he said.

One of them was identified by him as Abdul Ghani, a member of a mafia dealing in fake foreign currencies. He said the two were arrested on a tip from Ramzi Ahmad Yusuf, who is being interrogated by Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Asked whether the second could be Aimal Kansi, who was also involved in the murder of American intelligence official and wanted by the FBI, the official said: "I have no information."

Aimal Kansi had been seen in Pakistan after the killings but later disappeared.

No senior government official was available to confirm the news.

A telephone attendant at the residence of Interior Minister when contacted at 10.10 pm said he had gone to bed. "He had gone to Swat and was too tired when he came back so he went to sleep a little early."

Interior Secretary Zafar Iqbal Rathore was not in the city and his family said he had gone to Karachi.

Senators Claim Kansi Arrested

BK2103123195 Hong Kong AFP in English 1145 GMT 21 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Islamabad, March 21 (AFP)—The man sought by the United States for allegedly killing two American CIA officials in Washington in 1993 has been arrested, two Pakistani senators claimed Tuesday [21 March].

But a spokesman for the American embassy here said they had no information on the arrest of terrorist suspect Mir Aimal Kansi.

The opposition senators, Hafiz Hussain and Aftab Sheikh, told the senate that Kansi was arrested from Pakistan's southwestern Balochistan province on Monday, along with Abdul Ghani, accused in a fake currency racket.

The pair were transfered to Islamabad, the deputies said. Police authorities here declined to comment.

Interior Minister Nasirullah Babar did not confirm or deny Kansi's arrest while speaking in the senate, although he admitted that two people, whom he did not identify, had been taken into custody.

The deputies claimed that US and Pakistani intelligence officials carried out the joint operation to catch Kansi, but did not say exactly where in Balochistan the arrests were made.

A top Balochistan official, Home Secretary Ghiasuddin Ahmad, told AFP in the provincial capital Quetta that he was unaware of Kansi's arrest.

Kansi is accused by US authorities of killing two CIA officials in a shooting outside the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) headquarters in Washington on January 25, 1993, in which six others were also injured.

After the shooting in Washington, he was believed to have fled to Pakistan, where his relatives from the Pushtu-speaking Kansi tribe live in Quetta.

"We have not handed over (the arrested men)," to the United States, the interior minister said, in answer to a question by the senate's deputy chairman, Mir Abdul Jabbar.

Babar assured the senate that no Pakistani national would be extradited to the US or any other country without due legal process here.

Last month, Pakistan extradited Ramzi Ahmad Yusuf, the prime suspect in the 1993 New York World Trade centre bombing, which left six people dead and 1,000 injured, after his arrest at a local hotel room.

Earlier this month, Pakistani police detained six people who reportedly had links with Ramzi. The six—an Iranian, three Sudanese and two Pakistanis—are said to be in a nearby jail.

Babar said Ramzi was not a Pakistani national. Ramzi was born in Kuwait and had three nationalities and passports, the minister said, without giving details.

In August last year, a team from the US Central Bureau of Investigation [as received] were in Quetta looking for Kansi, but their search, in which they were assisted by Pakistani soldiers, was unsuccessful.

Nationals 'Will Not Be Extradited'

BK2103121495 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1100 GMT 21 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The interior minister, Retired Major General Nasirullah Khan Babar has said that Pakistani nationals arrested in connection with terrorist activities will not be extradited until prosecuted in the country and they will be given all the facilities to defend themselves. He was replying to points of order by Hafiz Hussain Ahmad and Mr. Aftab Sheikh in Senate today who wanted clarification from the government about the arrest of two persons—Aimal Kansi and Abdul Ghani—brought from Quetta to Islamabad. The interior minister referring to the case of Ramzi Yusuf said he was born in Kuwait and was an Iranian national and he has three nationalities and passports. Those arrested in Peshawar had disclosed the assassination attempt plan by Ramzi Yusuf against the prime minister. The interior minister said latest arrests are part of the ongoing inquiry and the people arrested from Quetta were identified by those who are in custody of the government and were linked with the conspiracy. He said most of the people arrested are foreign nationals.

The minister of state for law and justice, Mr. Raza Rabbani, made it clear that the government was fully conscious of its obligations and it was found that terrorism, whether internal or international, is to be combated with full force.

Police Hunt Four Accomplices of Ahmad Yusuf

BK2103055595 Peshawar THE FRONTIER POST in English 21 Mar 95 p 1

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Peshawar—The NWFP [North-West Frontier Province] police has launched a hunt for nabbing the four accomplices of Ramzi Ahmad Yusuf, involved in the New York World Trade Centre blast.

Sources informed that it was one of the major operations in the province which is in progress with the assistance of paramilitary forces.

It may be mentioned here that six people were already arrested by the law enforcing agencies in Peshawar, last week. Three of them were Sudanese, one Iranian and two Pakistanis. They were arrested for their alleged links with Ramzi.

The Crime Investigation Department (CID) on the instruction of federal interior ministry conducted raids in University Town area and arrested the alleged accused. They were later shifted to Adiala jail, Rawalpindi, for further investigation.

The latest move was also initiated after the instructions from the senior officials of the police department. Under this move the search for the four Afghan nationals, who resided in University Town, Pubbi, Chamhani and Dawoodzai areas, is started. Joint investigation teams of different law enforcing agencies are conducting the search operation. Raids were conducted at University Town and Dawoodzai areas the other day but none of the arrest was made possible. [sentence as published]

It was learnt that a superintendent and deputy superintendent of CID [Criminal Investigation Department] department on Sunday left for Karachi for getting further details of the terrorists residing in Peshawar. The tip for the latest hunt was provided by one Shaukat, an accused, arrested by the railways police along with explosives and time bomb some time back. During the interrogation he gave the names of certain influentials residing in Peshawar, who were involved in illegal activities with the group of Ramzi. Earlier, he was interrogated by the local police but later handed over to CIA [Crime Investigation Agency] police.

It was learnt that a group of five terrorists, residing in Mianwall, were also allegedly, involved in the terrorist activities of the Ramzi. During the initial interrogation of Ramzi, the Pakistani authorities were informed about the group. Sources said that this group earlier came to Di Khan, later drove to Afghanistan via Miranshah.

Officials Claim Yusuf Tried To Kill Bhutto

BK1803122195 Hong Kong AFP in English 1207 GMT 18 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Karachi, March 18 (AFP)—Pakistani officials Saturday [18 March] claimed that the man accused of bombing the World Trade Center in New York also tried to assassinate Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto during her election campaign in 1993.

Ramzi Ahmad Yusuf, extradited from Pakistan last month to stand trial in the United States, was injured when a bomb he was handling exploded in his hands near Bhutto's Karachi residence, Bilawal House, officials alleged.

The bomb was intended to assassinate Bhutto, they claimed, but added they did not know why Yusuf targetted her at the time.

The incident was not reported to the police, the officials said, adding that Ramzi was treated by a local doctor who also did not report it.

Bhutto's official spokesman refused to comment on how the information was obtained but other officials said it came from one of six men arrested in Peshawar earlier this month.

The six—three Sudanese, an Iranian and two Pakistanis—were arrested in northwest Peshawar, bordering Afghanistan, and shifted to the Adiala Jail in nearby Rawalpindi on Wednesday.

The superintendent of the jail has said he had no information about their reported connection with Ramzi, but a local newspaper The News alleged they did have links with the World Trade Centre bombing suspect.

Ramzi was arrested in a hotel room in Islamabad on a tipoff from an informant last month and quickly extradited.

Yusuf has pleaded not guilty to 11 charges brought against him in connection with the February 26, 1993, bombing that killed six people and injured more than 1,000.

Karachi Diplomats Briefed on Security Measures

BK2003135095 Islamabad PTV Television Network in English 1100 GMT 20 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] In Karachi today, Sindh Chief Minister Syed Abdullah Shah held a meeting with diplomats from foreign missions and reviewed the security arrangements for the foreign diplomats based in Karachi. The chief minister invited suggestions in this regard and informed them about the measures being taken by the government for further improvement in diplomatic security arrangements. He said that special [telephone] numbers would be provided for the diplomats, apart from the already allotted number 134 and a provincial control room established at the chief minister's house where a provincial minister and an adviser are available to respond to any call or information received to combat crime and lawlessness.

He further stated that certain quarters are planning to disrupt the law and order situation, but the government is committed to provide security to all citizens, including the foreign diplomats. The chief minister said that law would take its own course to foil such attempts. The chief minister issued immediate directives to the concerned authorities vis-a-vis various suggestions brought forward by the diplomats.

Express Concern Over Security

BK2103063195 Islamabad THE NEWS in English 21 Mar 95 p 12

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Karachi: The diplomatic corps on Monday [20 March] expressed "grave concern" over the security of foreign missions, their staff and family members in the violence-hit city of Karachi and demanded special security measures.

At a meeting with Sindh Chief Minister Syed Abdullah Shah at the Sindh Assembly building, a 39-member delegation of diplomats expressed concern over the deteriorating law and order situation in Karachi. The delegation headed by the US Consul General Karachi comprised diplomats of Japan, United Kingdom, Germany and Saudi Arabia.

The Sindh government officials said the meeting was fixed four days back as many diplomats wanted to meet the chief minister after the killing of two US Consulate Central staffers on March.

"There is a growing concern among the diplomats, especially the ones belonging to the western countries, about their safety after the killing of US officials," an official said.

Although none of the diplomats gave detail about the meeting, a source said some of them were very harsh and gave the chief minister tough time.

"The diplomat expressed their reservation and dissatisfaction over various government measures and the manner it was tackling the Karachi problem," said a cabinet minister.

The chief minister informed the diplomats that the government has beefed up security measures by setting pickets at all diplomatic mansions and residences, The chief minister told foreign diplomats of a special emergency telephone line set up for them to contact the authorities.

Sources told The News that Abdullah Shah blamed drug mafia for violence in Karachi and and the government has initiated both administrative and political measures for the solution of the problem which include talks with the MQM [Muhajir Quami Movement] and the holding of an all parties conference. "The situation is grim but can't force us to leave," said a diplomat, who asked not to be named.

Sindh Minister: 22,000 Forces Deployed in Karachi

BK2003155695 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1400 GMT 20 Mar 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The Sindh Assembly continued discussion on the law and order situation in the province, particularly Karachi. Earlier, during question hour, it was informed that the provincial government has taken various steps to maintain law and order in the province. The minister for planning and development, Mr. Nissar Ahmed Khoro, informed the house that seven wings of Rangers and 22,000 police force has been deployed in Karachi to curb terrorist activities. Three thousand-men strong elite force has also been established for deployment and control the crimes. It was also informed that there is no political prisoner confined in Sindh jails. However, 311 persons affilitaed with various political parties are confined in jails facing criminal cases.

Interior Minister's Remarks on Karachi Criticized

BK1903093095 Islamabad KHABRAIN in Urdu 18 Mar 95 p 10

[Editorial: "Woeful Situation in Karachi and the Interior Minister's Logic"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The U.S. Government has ordered its employees based in Karachi to send their school-age children and, if they wish, their other family members to the United States forthwith. A U.S. State Department statement further states that if the U.S. citizens living in Karachi want to leave the city, then the U.S. Government will assist and guide them in doing so. A spokesman of the U.S. Consulate in Karachi has also confirmed that in addition to children, some diplomatic staff members are also being evacuated from Karachi, and more stringent measures have been taken to protect the staff remaining in the city.

According to press reports, European diplomats based in Islamabad have been continuously expressing concern over the situation in Karachi. The reports sent by them to their governments say that the Pakistani Government has failed in its efforts to control the situation in Karachi. Several European diplomatic missions have ordered extraordinary measures to protect their diplomatic personnel stationed in Karachi.

The expression of concern by foreign diplomatic missions over the situation prevailing in Karachi reflects the sharply deteriorating situation in the city, which is affecting Pakistan's economy. Share prices have been falling, and transactions have remained dull at the Karachi Stock Exchange over the past few days. An investors delegation from Britain has postponed its scheduled visit to Karachi. This 49-member delegation led Tony Bauldry, the minister for commonwealth affairs, was to visit Karachi from 29 to 31 March.

Talking to reporters in Rawalpindi on Thursday, Federal Interior Minister Major General, retired, Nasirullah Khan Babar expressed the opinion that the murder of the U.S. diplomats in Karachi took place because of the mistake of the U.S. Consulate. The diplomats were not provided adequate security protection. The U.S. Consulate had hired the services of a private security agency. Had they asked the government, they would have been provided with security squads to escort diplomats from and to their offices. We don't know what the interior minister is trying to prove by saying this. Are the people being killed in mosques, their homes, and on highways because of their own mistakes? Should they have requested the government to provide them with security squads before venturing out of their homes? The government is responsible for protecting the lives of the citizens, and if it is unable to discharge this responsibility, it should relinquish power instead of making lame excuses.

Only time will tell whether the United States will react to the interior minister's argument or will keep quiet, considering his statement unworthy of any attention, but even a citizen with a scant understanding of politics will express his surprise and regret over the reasoning given by the interior minister. We would like to request that the interior minister not try to present a justification for the woeful situation prevailing in Karachi and refrain from making statements that may further complicate the situation and create difficulties for Pakistan. This kind of statement will also not enhance the prestige of his government.

Rangers Gain Power To Arrest, Prosecute 'Terrorists'

BK1803135095 Islamabad PTV Television Network in English 1300 GMT 18 Mar 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] In Karachi, the Rangers have been given the powers to arrest and prosecute terrorists and criminals. The decision to this effect was taken at a high-level meeting held in the city with Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto in the chair. The meeting called to review law and order situation in Karachi was attended, among others, by the Sindh chief minister, Syed Abdullah Shah; chief secretary, inspector general of police, and other high- ranking officials. The meeting reviewed progress on the measures taken during the last week's meeting to control terrorist activities in the city. The prime minister directed the law enforcing agencies to take further foolproof measures in order to curb terrorism in Karachi.

Briefing newsmen after the meeting, the special spokesman said an ordinance providing for delegation of police powers to the Rangers is being issued in a day or two. The spokesman said as a result of the amendment in the existing law, a legal lacuna will be removed and through the operation launched against terrorist elements by civil law enforcing agencies, terrorism in the city could be effectively checked without any discrimination. In this regard, the spokesman said the meeting decided that no discrimination will be made between political parties or sectarian groups. Stressing the need to accelerate the judicial process, the prime minister said all pending criminal cases before the court should be decided as early as possible. The prime minister also directed that the police officials must be promoted and posted without any political considerations and purely on the basis of merit.

Replying to a question, the spokesman said federal and provincial governments are prepared to negotiate with industrialists and businessmen on law and order situation in Karachi. He said there is no justification to go on strike, as the government has already taken stern action against the terrorists.

To another question, the spokesman said the prime minister was informed that police have arrested two big gangs involved in terrorist activities. Evidence about their involvement in many cases was also provided. Details of the evidence are being worked out and will be made available to newsmen shortly. The spokesman said action is being contemplated against some administration officials in addition to a former deputy commissioner and a subdivisional magistrate. The spokesman said action will certainly be taken against officials if it is proved that they are intentionally not taking interest in the discharge of duties assigned to them or are hiding the facts.

Further on Extended Powers

BK1903101495 Islamabad THE MUSLIM in English 19 Mar 95 pp 1, 8

[Report by Salhuddin Haider]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Karachi, March 18 A high-level meeting, presided over by Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto here Saturday [18 March] decided to vest powers in the para-military Rangers force to arrest, investigate and prosecute terrorists, criminals and those involved in subversive acts.

An Ordinance in this regard would be promulgated soon an official spokesman said later, but refrained from elaborating whether such an authority will be meant exclusively for Karachi, or for whole of the country.

The Rangers, deployed since long in the Sindh metropolis, had been asserted themselves even in areas, reserved primarily for police and have finally succeeded in convincing the government that they ought to be armed with the kind of authority which had rested in police till date.

The spokesman, however, removed the impression that army would be redeployed to deal with the subversion cases or help the administration tackle the growing menace of terrorism.

There has been a constant tussle between police and Rangers over the area of jurisdiction which is manifested from lack of coordination between the two agencies.

The Rangers commanded by the army officers had overtaken the security duties at the Karachi Airport creating a sort of battle with the Airport Security Force [ASF] and the police. Drawing its mandate from a statute book, the ASF, had refused to entertain the presence of Rangers within the airport premises. However, the rangers had taken duties at approaches to the Jinnah terminal building and the police were driven out.

The spokesman said the meeting was informed that two powerful gangs had been arrested for being involved in subversion and terrorism in Karachi. They had confessed their association with six major groups like the two MQM [Mujahir Qaumi Movement] factions, Haqiqi and Altaf, the Al-Zufiqar Organisation. The Sipah-i-Sahuba, Tehrik Jafria Pakistan and they Jeay Sindh Taraqui Pasand Mahaz of Dr Qadir Magsi.

He said the operation against the terrorists was not against the particular group but was against criminals who had sheltered themselves in various sectarian and ethnic factions.

He said of the 132 prisoners condemned to death, 123 had appealed for review of sentences against them. He said the meeting also decided that no major transfers will be effected in law enforcement agencies like police etc from DIG [Deputy Inspector General of Police] to the level of station house officers. Merit alone would be the criteria for letting them do their job. However, negligence of duty, or deliberate attempts to conceal facts, or violate the official Secrets Act, will be severely dealt with.

The Prime Minister, the spokesman said, directed to expedite legal proceedings against those arrested on charge of subversion and criminal activities.

He said investigation was progressing smoothly in the killing of two Americans in Karachi. These were being conducted by FBI of America and Pakistan authorities. He said protection will be given to the Foreigners.

The meeting was attended by the Chief Minister, the Chief Secretary, Home Secretary and senior police officials.

APP adds: When asked if the March 25 strike call by FPCCI [Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry] also came up at the meeting the spokesman said the ministers and concerned authorities will talk to them in this regard. He pointed out that the government has started taking concrete measures to control the situation in Karachi and therefore he foresees no ground for the strike now.

On the contrary, he said, the possibility cannot be ruled out that the strike may provide an excuse to terrorists to renew their terroristic activities. He advised the strikers not to adopt the path of strike and said parleys would be held with them on official level.

Stocks Take 'Nose Dive,' Lose 47 Points

Altaf Hussain Statement Cited

BK2103092895 Karachi BUSINESS RECORDER in English 21 Mar 95 pp 1, 12

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Karachi: Equities took a nose-dive on the Karachi Stock Exchange on Monday [20 March], with the index hitting a 17-month low at 1636.45 points, as sellers once again dominated the proceedings, unnerved by several destabilising factors.

It was commonly believed that the worst was not yet over. Though there was some calm in the city due to the crackdown on suspected terrorists, the situation is still very tense. Marketmen on every counter unloaded their portfolios, suffering heavy battering.

"The day's slide was mainly attributed to the statement of Altaf Hussain that over 250,000 Muhajirs would be killed and people should store rations for six months", research analyst Naveed of KASB [expansion unknown] said. He said that there were, however, chances that the bearish drive would slow down depending on—the outcome of Nawaz Sharif-Altaf Hussain's dialogue in London. "The stocks have already touched the rock-bottom, but all fundamentals are strong enough for a rebound. The current prices are favourable for long term investment and if the investor has a holding power of six or nine months, he could easily be in the safe haven," Naveed claimed.

"The relative calm on the political front and some good initiatives on the economic front could change the current bearish outlook for the share business provided selective buying was sustained at every dip," analysts said.

However, a negative report which may affect the earnings of the corporate sector was that the Federal Government had decided to raise the level of taxes during the next financial year to 20 per cent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) from the current 18 per cent. This was indicated by V.A. Jaffarey while presiding over the Finance Ministry's, Advisory Committee.

The index on Monday fell by a hefty 47 points to close at 1636.45. This fall was triggered off by institutional selling." Every falling point erodes market capitalisation by about Rs. 150 million," analysts said. It means that with the decline of 47 points over Rs 7.050 billion has been wiped off in a single session. The price index slipped to new lows mainly due to the fall in the base shares like Engro, down by Rs. 13, Shell, by Rs. 10, ICI, by Rs. 9. Dewan Salman, PICIC and PSO, by Rs. 5 each, Pakland and D.G. Khan Cements, by Rs. 4.50 each, Pak Synthetics and Dawood Hercules by Rs. 4 each, Nishat Mills by Rs. 3.50, Adamjee Insurance and Crescent Textile by Rs. 3 each, Union Bank by Rs. 2.25, Gharibwal Cement, Searle, Brooke Bond, Century Paper and Crescent Bank by Rs. 2 each and Orix Leasing, Askari Leasing by one rupee each.

A few scrips resisted the down trend such as Philips Electrical Company which appreciated by Rs. 8, Spark-Davis was up by Rs. 5, Habib Sugar by Rs. 1.25 and Century Insurance, Fazal Cloth and Sana Industries by one rupee each, another 37 issues registered nominal gains between 5 to 75 paisa.

Business was down to 11.018 million shares as compared with 23.373 million shares of Sunday. A few deals were struck by financial institutions in Dhan Fibres, Pak Elktron and Pioneer Cement.

Losers were leading the gainers by a ratio of 6:1 as when the final bell was heard there were 242 minus signs as against 42 plus ones while 52 shares were pegged at their last level.

There were two company announcements these top empty. Reliance Cotton's profit after tax was Rs. 13.464 million but accumluated losses figures at Rs. 7.378 million and Islamic Investment Bank at the end of financial year did not declare any dividend while its profit after tax totalled. Rs. 22.823 million.

PTC was once again the volume leader and on a turnover of 3.422 million shares slipped to Rs. 32.10 from Rs. 32.75, losing 65 paisa. PNSC and Tri-Star Shipping also showed small pruning while PIAC gained 50 paisa. Its GDR remained unchanged at $90 to $95. But several analysts believed that the recent selling pressure indicates that several foreign buyers are converting their GDRs into shares.

Hub Power stood fifth in volume on a trading of 712,500 shares and the value was pushed down to Rs. 13 from Rs. 13.80, denoting a fall of 80 paisa. The issue during the day touched the highest at Rs. 13.85 but failed to maintain the upward move and closed with fresh losses.

Lucky Cement, on a hectic trading of 1.937 million shares, claimed second best position but during the subsequent transactions the scrip suffered a loss of Rs. 1.30 closing at Rs. 18.95 as against the opening of Rs. 20.25. Not a single plus sign was reported in this column while D.G. Khan and Pakland suffered fresh losses to the extent of Rs.4.50 each. Remaining losses were in the vicinity of one rupee to Rs. 250.

Pak Synthetic showed a sharp decline of Rs. 4 and finally settled at Rs. 43. However, trading wise it claimed third best deals of 973,500 shares. Elsewhere there was no positive issue at this sector while minus ones were led by Dewan Salman followed by Rupali, Dhan and Ibrahim Fibres.

Investment companies and banks are still under pressure and as many as 27 scrips landed in the negative zone as against two gainers. Faysal Bank, with over 766,500 shares, proved to be the fourth active issues for the day. Its price was pushed to Rs. 22.75 from Rs. 24.35, a net decline of Rs. 1.60. Citicorp Investment Bank and Security Bank appreciated by 50 and 25 paisa respectively.

BOND SECTION: FEBC remained unchanged at Rs. 102.20.

Confidence Measures Sought

BK2103091695 Karachi BUSINESS RECORDER in English 21 Mar 95 pp 1, 12

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Karachi: The Governing Board of Directors of the Karachi Stock in an emergent [aspublished] meeting to restore the confidence of the investor has requested the government to immediately take measures in the direction of improving the law and order situation because since January 1, around Rs.63 billion ($2.1 billion) has been eroded.

The governing board of directors of the Karachi Stock Exchange [KSE] in an emergent meeting held on Monday reviewed the crisis in the stock market and expressed its grave concern over the continued downward trend since the beginning of this year. The KSE-100 price index was hovering around 2058.88 on January 1, and now has touched the 17th month low to 1734.76, reflecting a net fall of 424.12 points and the market capitalisation has been eroded by about Rs.63 billion during this period.

It may be added here that during the last seven days from March 13 to March 20, alone the KSE 100 index depicted a fall of 135.37 points, indicating an erosion of over Rs. 20 billion in terms of market capitalisation.

It was also observed that besides other international and local adverse factors affecting the stocks market activity, one of the major reasons is the unprecedented deteriorating law and order situation particularly in the city of Karachi.

To arrest the declining trend and restore the confidence of the investors, both local and foreign, the Board of Directors of Karachi Stock Exchange requested the government to immediately take measures like the government controlled institutions such as NIT [National Investment Trust], State Life Insurance and Pakistan Insurance Corporation should play their role in supporting the market, relaxation of prudential regulation by reducing the existing margin requirements for advance against share to 20 per cent and to include all listed in the approved list of the banks for the purpose of advances, all commercial banks be directed to invest to the extent of five per cent of their deposits in the listed shares outside the credit ceiling and the State Bank of Pakistan may be requested to relax any regulation/controls to the contrary, it was also urged to maintain a consistent and long term policy in relation to stocks market investment especially in the context of commitment to foreign investors. In this connection the board took a serious view of the inconsistency and delays reflected in the matter of conversion of the GDRs into Shares.

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